

Elie Gervais and the Fantastic Historiography of EG FECIT

JESSE KRAFT, PH.D. (NEW YORK, NEW YORK)¹

Almost by default, a coin is expected to provide a certain amount of information. For the most part, modern numismatists assume that they should be able to look at a coin and immediately determine particular attributes. This might include its date, denomination, place of manufacture, and issuing authority. The Continental dollar is an especially intriguing case (Fig. 1).² At first glance, with seemingly-authoritative text and the 1776 date, it would seem foolish to question when and by whom the coins were struck. While the coins do not give a particular mint location, from the date and the CONTINENTAL CURRENCY inscription, it

1. Special thanks to the Eric P. Newman Numismatic Education Society (EPNNEs) and Andrew Newman, who funded the research performed in Germany and Switzerland in preparation of this article; Rainer Raillard, Senior Archives Councilor at the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neuwied; Bernd Willscheid, Director of the Roentgen-Museum Neuwied; Alain Dubois, archivist at the Archives d'Etat de Genève; Carolin Merz, MA, Curator at the Germanisches Nationalmuseum in Nuremberg; Christoph Heinen, of the Kölner Münzkabinett Tyll Kroha Nachfolger; Leonard Augsburg, Project Coordinator of the Newman Numismatic Portal at Washington University in St. Louis, who provided advice and support along the way; David Hill, ANS Librarian who helped me search for obscure references while researching; Christopher McDowell and Julia Casey, who helped try to identify the wax seal; Dr. Dietrich Fabian, author of *Abraham und David Roentgen*, who spearheaded research specifically on Elie Gervais in the 1980s, but whose research lies mainly in the form of notes and letters.

2. While the Continental dollar is facing an existential crisis, this article continues to call it “the 1776 Continental dollar” and “a coin” for the sake of brevity.



Figure 1. The 1776 Continental dollar is currently in an existential crisis. Some numismatists feel that evidence continues to point towards a ca. 1776 date of production in either Philadelphia or New York, while others sense that evidence likely points towards a ca. 1783 date of production in either Britain or Continental Europe. American Numismatic Society, 1911.85.7 (images enlarged).

has long been assumed that they were struck in the fledgling United States in the year independence was declared. One variety—that with EG FECIT punched on the obverse—even suggests a maker. However, a closer look at both recently-discovered documentary evidence, as well as circumstantial and material evidence, allows for an alternate origin of the coins to appear. To date, no definitive proof has yet to arise pertaining to who produced the Continental dollar. The fact that circumstantial evidence is beginning to point elsewhere should not go unnoticed and, with all hopes, will lead to the discovery of such proof.

Because this is currently a charged topic in American numismatics and definitive proof remains lacking, this article will not make any absolute claims. It has two objectives. First, to explore the historiography of the Continental dollar, particularly tracing how numismatists have dealt with the EG FECIT conundrum over the past 150 years. It will explore earlier theories of who “EG” might have been, attempt to explain how those theories developed, and explain why numismatists may not consider them sound arguments any longer. In the course of doing so, it will show that there have been many theories to this question in the past but, all the while, there was always a shadow of doubt over each of them. Today, two theories are up for debate: that the coins were struck ca. 1776 in either New York or Philadelphia by Elisha Gallaudet, or that they were struck ca. 1783 in either England or in Continental Europe. This article will provide circumstantial evidence that suggests that Elie Gervais could have produced the coins in a small town in Germany. This information revolves around information left by contemporary collectors, material similarities between the Continental dollars and other pieces struck in Europe at the time, and similarities in signatures of that coin and known pieces engraved by Gervais. It will trace Gervais’s life, some of his work, and offer concluding remarks.³ Although nothing

3. As this paper focuses primarily on EG FECIT, there are many theories and topics related to the Continental dollar that will not be covered, such as the several newspaper articles from before 1780 that have been claimed to prove the existence of the Continental dollar that early—like the *London Chronicle* article of December 24, 1776, which has been completely debunked by Julia H. Casey, “The Letter from the Officer of the 64th Regiment was not About the 1776 Continental Dollar,” *Journal of Early American Numismatics* 4, no. 1 (June 2021): 29–35. Objects similar to the 1776 Continental dollar, such as the 1783 *Felicitas Britannia et America* medal, which uses an eerily similar reverse as the Continental dollars, are also ignored here. Furthermore, there is research that is currently ongoing that this paper does not refer to, as much of it is confidential until published by the respective authors—and also has little to do with EG FECIT, but with other aspects of the coin. Needless to say, the historiography of the 1776 Continental dollar is far from over, and key articles related to these other aspects of the coin are intentionally overlooked, as they do not add new information to the understanding of EG FECIT, in particular. That said, the literature on the subject is so vast that there may even be essential texts related to EG FECIT that this historiography inadvertently overlooks.

yet has definitively proven Gervais to be linked with the production of the coin, because he is a viable contender, it is hoped that the attention given to him may lead to the truth in the matter.

THE FANTASTIC HISTORIOGRAPHY OF EG FECIT

Generations of numismatists have used circumstantial evidence to claim that Elisha Gallaudet created the Continental dollar in 1776—that the EG FECIT punched into one of the obverse dies used to strike the coins stood for “Elisha Gallaudet made it.” This was first fully explained to numismatists by Eric P. Newman in “The Continental Dollar of 1776 Meets Its Maker,” published in *The Numismatist* in August 1959. Newman, himself, was aware that he had not yet found definitive proof. The very first words of the article, in fact, were “Does circumstantial evidence solve this problem?”⁴ Although he makes a valiant effort to try and fill in the missing gaps, the short answer to his question is “no,” by definition, circumstantial evidence does not solve the problem.⁵ Newman admits that “a continual challenge to numismatists” has been the lack of authorization for them in the annals of the Continental Congress.⁶ For decades after his article reached print, however, few others continued in that challenge, assuming that the answer had been found. Newman’s theory had stuck, and even developed further in the years that followed. As recently as 2014, numismatists made claims like, “Newman’s research confirms Elisha Gallaudet as the engraver of the dies,”⁷ when, in fact, it does nothing of the sort. It was merely a suggestion.

Newman was not the first to try and solve this issue of who, exactly, “EG” might have been. In 1875, though he does not give a name, Sylvester S. Crosby notes that the letters are “probably the initials of the die cutter.”⁸ Here, Crosby is wise not to attribute them to anyone without proper evidence. Crosby even seems aware that the word *fecit* could potentially refer to anyone in the production process, but felt that it “probably” refers to the engraver. Needless to say, the Continental dollar was considered a bedrock of American numismatics even when

4. Eric P. Newman, “The Continental Dollar of 1776 Meets Its Maker,” *The Numismatist* 72, no. 8 (August 1959): 915.

5. By definition, circumstantial evidence is “evidence which inferentially proves the principal fact by establishing a condition of surrounding and limiting circumstances, whose existence is a premise from which the existence of the principal fact may be concluded by necessary laws of reasoning.” “Circumstantial Evidence,” *The Law Dictionary* (accessed October 2023).

6. Newman, “The Continental Dollar of 1776 Meets Its Maker,” 915.

7. Paul Gilkes, “Silver 1776 Continental Currency dollar brings \$1.41M,” *Coin World* (May 19, 2014), accessed February 2023.

8. Sylvester S. Crosby, *The Early Coins of America; and the Laws Governing Their Issue* (Boston: Self-Published, 1875), 305.

Crosby was active. It took another generation of numismatists to try and advance the topic. Early cataloguers were mum on the topic. In the 1895 catalogue for the Richard B. Winsor collection, for instance, the Chapman brothers refer to the inscription as “the engraver’s initials,” but do not elaborate beyond that.⁹

It was not until 1904 that a suggested name appears in print. In the auction catalogue of the John G. Mills collection, the Chapman brothers noted the initials on the Continental dollar listed in lot 113 and simply stated, “E. G. FECIT (Edward Getz).”¹⁰ This claim was not only quickly picked up by other numismatists, but also conflated with another first name. In 1909, when Edgar H. Adams wrote in the June issue of *The Numismatist*, “Who ‘E.G.’ was is a matter of speculation,” he wrote that “someone has stated that the initials stand for Ephraim Getz, but what authority there is for this statement is not known.”¹¹ In a 1910 Austrian publication on Nova Constellatio and Fugio coins, C.V. Ernst states, “Since one of the copies has the initials EG FECIT, it is assumed that they are from Edward Getz.”¹² Edward Getz is also listed as the maker in the June 1912, January 1915, and December 1917 auction catalogues of Henry Chapman.¹³ In 1916, Albert R. Frey repeated this information in the *American Journal of Numismatics*.¹⁴ That same year, B. Max Mehl regurgitated, verbatim, the original *Numismatist* claim

9. S.H. & H. Chapman, *Catalogue of the Magnificent Collection of Coins of the United States Formed by the Late Richard B. Winsor, Esq., Providence, R.I.* (Philadelphia: S.H. & H. Chapman, 1895), 25.

10. S.H. & H. Chapman, *Catalogue of the Magnificent Collection of Coins of the United States: Formed by John G. Mills, Esq.* (Philadelphia: S.H. & H. Chapman, 1904), 15.

11. Italics added for emphasis. Edgar H. Adams, “First Silver Dollar for the United States,” *The Numismatist* 22, no. 6 (June 1909): 177.

12. Translated by present author. Ernst goes on to say, “It is also assumed that the stamps were made either out of speculation or through the instigation of some members of the Congress (perhaps at the suggestion of Rittenhouse?). As mentioned, they were intended for the minting of dollars, but were not used because there was a shortage of silver, but probably also because in 1776 the new coinage law had not yet been passed. In A. Weyl’s ‘The Fonrobertsche Collection of Overseas Coins and Medals’ two of these copies on pewter are illustrated and described under numbers 323 and 324; they are fairly common in pewter, but exceedingly rare in other metals. Some of these finishes exist in brass, and only one or two are known to be in silver.” C.V. Ernst, *Die Nova Constellatio- und die Fugio- Münzen, die ersten Münzen der Vereinigten Staaten* (Wien: k.k. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1910), 7.

13. Henry Chapman, *Catalogue of the Magnificent Collection of Ancient Greek and Roman, European, Oriental, Early American and United States Coins of George H. Earle, Jr., Esq., Philadelphia* (Philadelphia: 1912), 148. Henry Chapman, *Catalogue of the Collections of American Coins of George J. Bascom, Esq. and William F. Brown, Esq.* (Philadelphia: 1915), 17. Henry Chapman, *Catalogue of the Collection of Coins of John M. White, Walter R. Heinrich, and a Philadelphia Collector* (Philadelphia: 1917), 27.

14. Albert R. Frey, “A Dictionary of Numismatic Names, Their Official and Popular Designations,” *American Journal of Numismatics* 50 (1916).

that Ephraim Getz was the maker of the Continental dollar.¹⁵ The Getz name does have a numismatic connection, with Peter Getz being an established die engraver in Lancaster, Pennsylvania and credited with the creation of a proposed coinage for the United States in 1792. How and why the Getz name became affiliated with the Continental dollar, however, remains unknown. Regardless of which first name was used, Getz was the only suggestion throughout the period. It was never challenged and apparently stuck in the minds of those who thought about it. Interest in identifying EG seemed to have waned in the decades that followed—perhaps because of a lack of supporting evidence, or because researchers felt that the question had been answered. Numismatists in the 1920s and 1930s paid little attention to who the initials may have belonged to—it was rarely, if ever, mentioned in articles or auction catalogues of the era.

By the late 1940s, however, interest grew once again when James Kelly seemingly (yet unintentionally) renewed the search. In his *Coins and Chatter* publication, Kelly would often answer recent inquiries in a column format. When one reader asked, “What does EG FECIT mean?” Kelly, clearly mimicking those before him, assumed the answer to be Edward Getz.¹⁶ However, in the course of this renewed interest, numismatists quickly began to question the legitimacy of the Getz claim. In 1951, while writing on early American die sinkers, Richard D. Kenney also identifies the maker as Ephraim Getz, but mentions that “further research has yet to prove conclusively that this engraver is the E. G. who appears on the Continental Dollar of 1776.”¹⁷ It was, perhaps, this very sentence that prompted Eric P. Newman to begin his own research, as he began to correspond with several numismatists on the subject shortly thereafter.¹⁸ On February 12,

15. Mehl used this quote, however, to answer the question, “Who designed the Fugio cent?” He answered, quite erroneously, “The Fugio cent—like the Continental dollar—bears the initials of the engraver ‘E.G. Fecit,’” followed by the quote above. B. Max Mehl, “The Question Box,” *Mehl’s Numismatic Monthly* 7, no. 1: 156–157.

16. James Kelly, “Questions and Answers,” *Kelly’s Coins and Chatter* 1, no. 5 (October 1, 1948): 3. More than likely, the questions and answers published in *Kelly’s Coins and Chatter* were planted, as each question simply asked what a particular coin was or how one differed from another, and the answer was always copied verbatim from Albert R. Frey’s “Dictionary.”

17. Richard D. Kenney, “Early American Medalists and Die-Sinkers (Prior to the Civil War),” *The Coin Collector’s Journal* 18, no. 3 (May–June 1951): 59. In an earlier article by Kenney, Getz was merely included in a list. Richard D. Kenney, “Early American Medalists and Die-Sinkers (Prior to the Civil War),” *The Coin Collector’s Journal* 18, no. 1 (January–February 1951): 5.

18. Correspondence does exist between Newman and Kenney that predates the latter’s 1951 article, showing the possibility that they could have discussed this topic earlier, but no evidence exists to suggest that Newman was thinking about this question prior to Kenney’s article.

1952, Newman wrote to Sydney P. Noe, curator of the American Numismatic Society, asking, “Do you have any information whatsoever on who Mr. ‘E.G.’ who made the Fugio dollar die is?”¹⁹ Unfortunately, Noe had fallen into the trap of acceptance on this issue and matter-of-factly responded that “The ‘E.G.’ about which you inquire, was Ephraim Getz, a Philadelphia engraver. There is a reference to him in the 1909 *Numismatist*.”²⁰ Interestingly, it was during this period that Damon G. Douglas first claimed that the coin was “produced, according to Du Simitière’s 1784 notebook, in London probably as a satire on the paper currency that was becoming a synonym for worthlessness.”²¹

Throughout the early 1950s, Newman proved very indecisive about whom he believed EG may have been, naming three different individuals in half as many years. When he wrote to Noe in February 1952, Newman had already begun to check through books on English die sinkers for a possible connection to EG, and still felt that “this gentleman could be identified in England or America,”²² but never found a link. It was around this time that Newman was asked to make revisions to the colonial section of Wayne Raymond’s *Standard Catalogue of United States Coins*. Newman’s edits and suggestions are preserved in correspondence with John J. Ford, Jr., associate editor of the publication. Quite interestingly, earlier editions of the *Standard Catalogue* actually stated that Continental dollars were “patterns of English origin and not uncommon in superb mint condition.”²³ Based on the lack of results from the publications he had checked on English engravers, however, Newman no longer agreed with this. He wrote to Ford that the coins “are of American origin not English and are not necessarily patterns,” and felt that “mention should be made that ‘E.G.’ is Ephraim Getz,

19. Eric P. Newman to Sydney P. Noe, letter dated February 12, 1952, in “Sydney P. Noe Correspondence, 1947–1956,” *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online), 20. Accessed February 2023.

20. Hand-written as a note at the bottom of the letter, Noe asks himself, “Peter Getz was born in 1768 in Lancaster, Pa. Could this E.G. be his father?” Sydney P. Noe to Eric P. Newman, letter dated February 14, 1952, in “Sydney P. Noe Correspondence, 1947–1956,” *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online), 21. Accessed February 2023.

21. Damon G. Douglas, “British-American Colonial Coins,” *The Numismatist* 61, no. 4 (April 1948): 249. Interestingly, it is likely this very reference that caused Newman to return an About Uncirculated brass example to dealer, James Kelly, because “evidence points to the fact that these may be satirical pieces made in England, after the Revolutionary War.” Regarding Du Simitière’s notebook, see Erik Goldstein, “The Myth of the Continental Dollar, Part II,” *The Numismatist* 131, no. 7 (July 2018): 36–46.

22. Eric P. Newman to Sydney P. Noe, letter dated February 12, 1952.

23. This was true for editions 11–15, 1946–1951, which would predate Douglas’s 1948 claim. Wayne Raymond, editor, *The Standard Catalogue of United States Coins from 1652 to Present Day* 15 (New York: Wayne Raymond, Inc., 1951), 17.

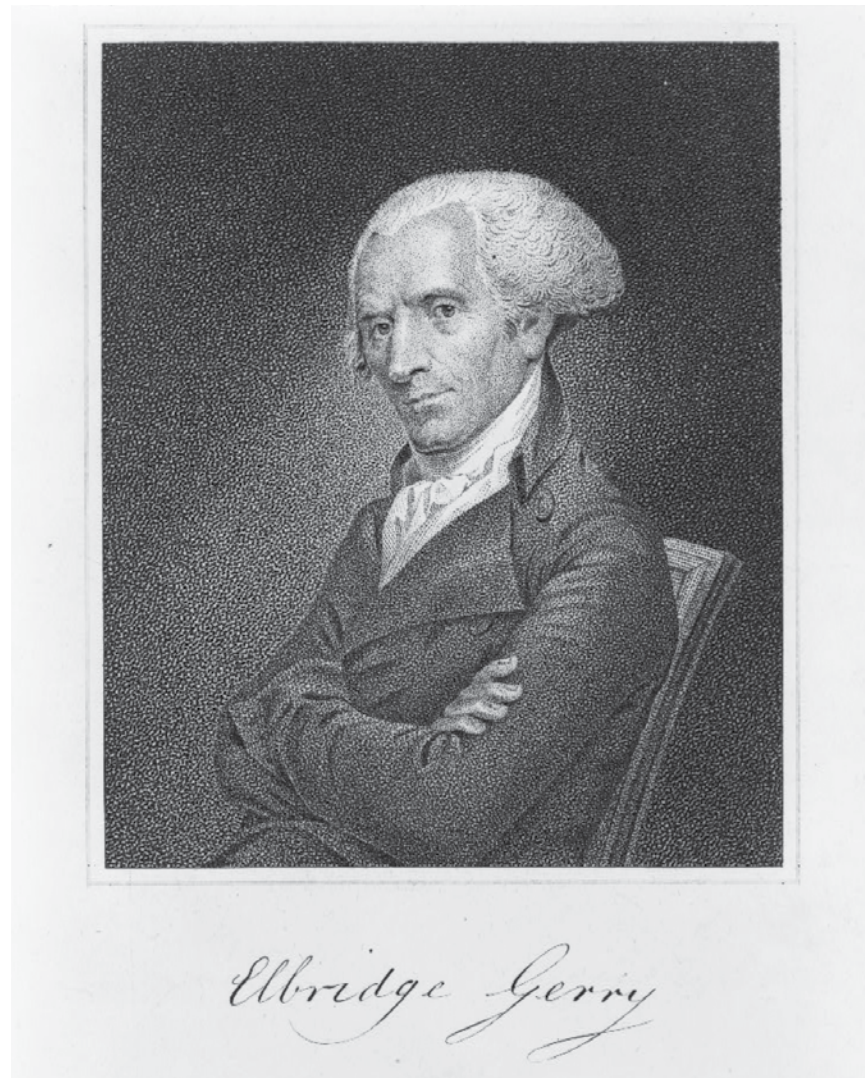


Figure 2. In the early 1950s, Elbridge Gerry (1744–1814) was a contender as the identity of “EG FECIT” on the 1776 Continental dollar. As quickly as he proposed Gerry, however, Eric Newman dismissed him as a possibility. Engraving by James Barton Longacre, 1847. Image courtesy Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division, control number 94509765.

a Philadelphia engraver.”²⁴ While the *Standard Catalogue* was not published in 1952 (because of the revisions), when it returned the following year, Newman had clearly been influential. That sixteenth edition stated that the coins were “the first attempt at a coinage by the Continental Congress. Probably struck in Philadelphia or Lancaster.”²⁵ Until recently, few again suggested anything but an American origin.

Long before that edition was published, however, Newman had completely changed his line of thinking on the coin.²⁶ By March of 1952, he had prepared an article for *The Coin Collector’s Journal*. Published in the July–August issue, Newman hoped he could set the record straight once and for all.²⁷ The lack of evidence surrounding Getz led Newman to finally disregard him as an option. Hoping to find evidence in the *Journal of the Continental Congress*, Newman searched through them, page by page. A few small mentions of war finance and a bit of coincidence led Newman “to suggest the possibility that ‘E.G.’ might be

24. Eric P. Newman, “Comments of Eric P. Newman on Revision of Colonial Section of Standard Catalogue,” in “John J. Ford, Jr. Correspondence, 1954,” *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online), 36. Accessed February 2023.

25. Wayte Raymond, editor, *The Standard Catalogue of United States Coins from 1652 to Present Day* 16 (New York: Wayte Raymond, Inc., 1953), 29.

26. Fortunately, because the *Standard Catalogue* did not mention Getz by name, the corrections made per Newman’s suggestions still held true with his future line of thinking.

27. He had sent a draft of it to Walter Breen on March 28 and said he “thought it might be interesting for you to review the same and write your comments on the margin and return it to me. I think you will enjoy some of the information which is expressed therein. If you do not have time to make the comments, please return it.” Eric P. Newman to Walter Breen, letter dated March 28, 1952, in “Walter H. Breen Correspondence, File 1, 1951–1956,” *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online), 18. Accessed February 2023. Although Breen’s response does not exist, a second letter by Newman does and states: “Thank you so much for your comments concerning the Continental Currency Pewter Dollars. There will be cuts of all items and I am going to add notes somewhat along the lines you suggest. The reverse which was used with the obverse ‘currency’ is the same one used with the E. G. Fecit and the same one as used in the obverse with the ornament which I have not yet described. I have received Adams’ notebook from the American Numismatic Society. The most disappointing thing is that I have a detailed letter from a Mr. Martin in Lancaster stating that they can find no record of Ephraim Getz or any other E. Getz; they state that Peter Getz died December 29, 1799 at the age of 47, which would make him being born in 1753. This is different from what Dickenson [sic] states but Dickenson [sic] is usually wrong. The father of Peter Getz was John Getz, a farmer. The grandfather was Johan Getz, an immigrant, who landed at the Port of Philadelphia in 1733. There is no estate of any one by the name of E. Getz in or around Lancaster. Certainly the foregoing does not show that John Getz could not have another child. There seems to be no birth records. I will continue to work on the matter.” Eric P. Newman to Walter Breen, letter dated April 4, 1952, in “Walter H. Breen Correspondence, File 1, 1951–1956,” *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online), 19. Accessed February 2023.

Elbridge Gerry" (Fig. 2).²⁸ Gerry was a member of the Continental Congress from Massachusetts who, while in session in Philadelphia on February 17, 1776, was given the task to "consider ways and means for supplying gold and silver for the support of the Army in Canada, [and to] superintend the emissions of bills of Credit."²⁹ In May of that year, he was a member of a seven-person committee who were "to devise ways and means for raising" ten million dollars for war purposes, which led to about \$52,000 in hard money being sent to Canada to pay off war debts.³⁰ While Newman does not claim that this money was in the form of Continental dollars, he does state that "if time had permitted Congress to demonstrate its patriotism and to strengthen its credit it would have forwarded silver to Canada in the form of coins minted by the Continental Congress. Elbridge Gerry's intimate association with treasury matters might therefore make him the 'E.G.' The initials are so large that they might refer to his suggestion of the coinage rather than that he made the actual dies."³¹ Newman was well

28. Eric P. Newman, "The 1776 Continental Currency Coinage," *The Coin Collector's Journal* 19, no. 4 (July–August 1952): 3. Newman notes that "the entire suggestion of the Chapman brothers is self-destructive due to a Freudian slip which they made in the sale of the Jackman collection on June 22, 1918. In the description of Lot 205 it stated, 'E.G.FECIT. Initial of the maker, Peter Getz, of Lancaster, Pa.'" Newman, "The Continental Dollar of 1776 Meets Its Maker," 925. Ironically enough, Newman himself made the very same (or, really, the exact opposite) Freudian slip in an August 7, 1995 letter to Bernard "Bunny" Edison, where he writes that "the genuine 1792 Washington President I piece made by Ephraim Getz comes only in copper and silver," rather than properly attributing them to Peter Getz. Eric P. Newman to Bernard "Bunny" Edison, letter dated August 7, 1995, in "Bernard 'Bunny' Edison Correspondence, 1968–1995," *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online), 17. Accessed February 2023. Interestingly, Q. David Bowers made the same Freudian slip just a few months after Newman, when he states that "Today in 1996 we believe that there are no 1815 cents and that the 1792 Washington 'cent' may have been struck by Ephraim Getz in Pennsylvania (while many other Washington items of the era were made in England)." Q. David Bowers, "Numismatic Nostalgia," *Rare Coin Review*, no. 109 (January/February 1996): 17. Neither in 1952, nor in 2023 with modern search functions, could an identifiable Edward or Ephraim Getz be located.

29. Minutes of February 17, 1776, from the *Journals of the Continental Congress*, in Eric P. Newman, "The 1776 Continental Currency Coinage," 3.

30. Minutes of May 22, 1776, from the *Journals of the Continental Congress*, in Eric P. Newman, "The 1776 Continental Currency Coinage," 3.

31. Interestingly, in every suggestion of Gerry as the possible maker of the Continental dollar, so much focus is paid to the 1776 period that Gerry emerges as some obscure politician from Marblehead and most authors do not pan out to realize that his political career was rather robust, culminating as the ninth governor of Massachusetts (1810–12) and the fifth Vice President of the United States under James Madison from 1813 until his death on November 23, 1814. Newman does correctly note that *gerrymandering* was coined after Gerry by the *Boston Gazette* on March 26, 1812—for his redrawing of Massachusetts Senate election districts while governor of that state, just prior to becoming vice president. Coincidentally, while it is very unlikely that Gerry had proposed the Continental dollar, thus the reason for

aware that he did not find concrete evidence and is careful not to say as such in print. In a letter to Sydney P. Noe, he admits, "I have nothing to confirm this but speculation."³² Prior to publication, Newman had bounced this idea off of Walter Breen. Because of Gerry's home state of Massachusetts, Breen—in his most artful way of concocting information—suggested that Paul Revere must have made the dies.³³ Other names were suggested to him in this period as well. In a letter dated October 3, 1954, for instance, Ray Williamson notes that "Mrs. Norweb thinks (or did think a couple of years ago) that some one in the Boston area named Gunn may have inspired EG FECIT. Some local Gunns from Richmond Virginia haven't been able to help."³⁴

In July 1953, Newman came across a reference that must have made his heart drop. While reading the freshly published *Counterfeiting in Colonial New York* by Kenneth Scott, "I did run into something which is an oddity to think about. I was looking through the index of names," he wrote to Breen, "and ran across the name of Elisha Gallaudet, whose initials, you will note, happen to be 'E.G.'"³⁵

his initials on the coins, a namesake of his, Elbridge Gerry Spaulding, became a member of the United States House of Representatives (R-NY), was a major proponent for the usage of unbacked paper currency, and was responsible for introducing the Legal Tender Act of 1862 to Congress, making him the "inventor of greenbacks," as numismatist Fred Reed once called him. Fred Reed, "On This Date in Paper Money History," *Paper Money* 44, no. 237 (May/June 2005): 220. Newman, "The 1776 Continental Currency Coinage," 3–4.

32. Eric P. Newman to Sydney P. Noe, letter dated July 7, 1952, in "Sydney P. Noe Correspondence, 1947–1956," *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online), 30. Accessed April 2023.

33. Here, Breen writes, "May I add my congratulations for an excellent piece of work on the 1776 Cont. Currency story. It makes a good deal of sense. I have a copy of a letter from Ray Williamson dated Sept. 29 which states that since no engraver could be found in Philadelphia in 1776, that the work might have been executed by Paul Revere in the Boston area—especially since Elbridge Gerry was 'a politician from the area where Paul Revere lived.' This makes quite a fascinating conjecture. I have absolutely no evidence for or against it. Certainly the few copper patterns of 1776 attributed (by Stickney and others) to Paul Revere betray the hand of an inexperienced die-cutter, and the style of lettering used there is not too dissimilar to that found on the pewter dollars. Note: A skillful engraver who had never sunk a coin die would be at a great disadvantage of just such a kind as the person responsible for these pieces was." Walter Breen to Eric P. Newman, letter dated October 14, 1952, in "Walter H. Breen Correspondence, File 1, 1951–1956," *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online), 24. Accessed February 2023.

34. Raymond H. Williamson to Eric P. Newman, letter dated October 3, 1954, in "Raymond H. Williamson Correspondence, File 1, 1954–1962," *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online), 8. Accessed February 2023.

35. He continued, "I find, on page 126 of that publication that he was an engraver in the City of New York in 1767 and some one asked him to make some plates to make counterfeit money and he turned the man over to the authorities. Is it possible to determine from the directories where this man was in 1776? At least he is the first engraver with the initials 'E.G.' that I have heard of." Eric P. Newman to Walter Breen, letter dated July 29, 1953, in "Walter H. Breen Correspondence, File 1, 1951–1956," *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online), 42. Accessed

Perhaps jaded by the fact that he had just published an article on the topic, or maybe content with keeping Elbridge Gerry as the identity, Newman did not put Gallaudet's name in print for nearly four years. There is also the very real possibility that he had forgotten what he found in 1953. Nearly three years after his initial discovery, in February 1956, Newman again wrote to Breen:

I have discovered a very exciting thing in which your help will be appreciated. I think I have a candidate for who 'E.G.Fecit' is. In the *Dictionary of American Painters, Sculptors and Engravers*, by Mantle Fielding, published in 1945, there is listed a gentleman born in New Rochelle, New York, in 1730, and who was still living in 1800, with the name Elisha Gallaudet.³⁶

The *Dictionary* had listed only one work by Gallaudet—a 1774 engraving of Rev. George Whitfield from *The Life of Whitfield*—which was described as “poorly engraved.”³⁷ Newman continues, “God knows the Continental dollar can be classified as a poor engraving job, not only in the crudity of its art but in the spacing of the letters, the errors in spelling, making dots into line, etc.,” and the evidence began to mount in Newman's mind.³⁸ Breen wrote back, reminding Newman of the mention of Gallaudet in the ANS publication on New York counterfeiting.³⁹ A year later, in early 1957, Newman wrote a two-part article entitled “Counterfeit Continental Currency Goes to War,” for *The Numismatist*. In the installment, he mentioned Elias Gallaudet by name in reference to the New York Waterworks

February 2023. The publication to which he refers: Kenneth Scott, *Counterfeiting in Colonial New York* (New York City: American Numismatic Society, 1953).

36. Newman later discovered that Gallaudet died in 1779. Eric P. Newman to Walter Breen, letter dated February 14, 1956, in “Walter H. Breen Correspondence, File 1, 1951–1956,” *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online), 79–80. Accessed February 2023. Two months later, Newman wrote to Richard Picker to inform him as well, noting that Gallaudet is “the only American engraver with the initials E.G. I have located in 15 years of hunting.” Eric P. Newman to Richard Picker, letter dated April 2, 1956, in “Richard Picker Correspondence, 1954–1956,” *Newman Numismatic Portal*, accessed February 17, 2023.

37. Eric P. Newman to Richard Picker, letter dated April 2, 1956.

38. Eric P. Newman to Richard Picker, letter dated April 2, 1956. Newman continued, “This is the only engraver I have ever found in Colonial America with the initials 'E.G.' What I would like to know is if you would look into the New York Public Library the next time you are there and see whether this portrait, done by Mr. Gallaudet, has any of the styling of the Continental dollar or whether it is signed. I would also appreciate your suggestions as to how we might run down any information about this man. It would be a great pleasure for me to untie this knot.”

39. Though he, himself, had seemingly forgotten that Newman had suggested this to him three years earlier. Walter Breen to Eric P. Newman, letter dated February 15, 1956, in “Walter H. Breen Correspondence, File 1, 1951–1956,” *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online), 81. Accessed February 2023.

notes of 1776—specifically, that “the proposed new pump and the headings were engraved by Elisha Gallaudet.”⁴⁰ While this was the first time he actually used his name in print, he still had not publicly named him as associated with the Continental dollar. By early 1958, however, Newman felt comfortable with doing so, albeit in the most unlikely of places: his local newspaper.

In April, the *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* carried a feature four-column story that gave a brief history of United States coinage and the numismatic research performed by Newman. The article stated, “Mr. Newman believes he has now identified E. G. for the records for the first time as Elisha Gallaudet.”⁴¹ It was not until a small note in the June 1958 issue of *The Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine* that this information was provided directly to numismatists, but without explanation. It simply stated, “Mr. Newman believes he has solved the meaning of the engraver's initials, 'E.G.' on the 1776 Continental dollar. He has identified them to denote Elisha Gallaudet.”⁴² Privately, Newman continued to search, combing through newspaper archives throughout the summer, hoping that “there would be any obituaries written up in any New Jersey paper at the time of his death mentioning this fact.”⁴³ He paid particular attention to the *New Jersey Gazette*, where references to Gallaudet were found in the past, but still located nothing regarding the Continental dollar.

Newman provided everything he had on the subject in his famous article, “The Continental Dollar of 1776 Meets Its Maker,” published in *The Numismatist* in August 1959. The article revolves around several points that Newman had

40. Eric P. Newman, “Counterfeit Continental Currency Goes to War (Concluded from January, 1957),” *The Numismatist* 70, no. 2 (February 1957): 140.

41. Ray Noonan, “Money Tells U.S. History: Currency Reflects Struggles and Developments,” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (April 13, 1958). Newman, however, was apparently not very happy with the article. He sent a copy to Walter Breen with a note that the article “gave absolutely no details and was just a newspaperman's idea of how to fill up the feature section of our newspaper.” Eric P. Newman to Walter Breen, letter dated June 24, 1958, in “Walter H. Breen Correspondence, File 2, 1957–1978,” *Newman Numismatic Portal*, accessed February 17, 2023.

42. “E.G. on Continental Dollar,” *The Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine* (June 1958): 1155.

43. Eric P. Newman to Kenneth Scott, letter dated June 30, 1958, in “Kenneth Scott Correspondence, 1957–1958,” *Newman Numismatic Portal*, accessed February 17, 2023. Interestingly, four days after writing this letter, Newman left for India for a summer vacation, what he later called an “exciting trip around the world.” At the same time, Newman asks Boyd if he could use images of Boyd's full sheets of New York Waterworks and Continental fractional currency, but this did not materialize. Eric P. Newman to F.C.C. Boyd, letter dated August 18, 1958, in “F.C.C. Boyd Correspondence, File 5, 1958–2003,” *Newman Numismatic Portal*, accessed February 17, 2023. In the New Jersey probate records for Gallaudet, his surname is spelled “Gillaudet,” the only known contemporaneous use of this spelling.

tentatively tied to the creation of the Continental dollar based on circumstantial evidence or hearsay.⁴⁴ His first claim is that the Continental dollar was intended to replace one-dollar paper notes for the issues of July 22, 1776. It is true that the Continental Congress did not print one-dollar notes from then through September 26, 1778, but no evidence exists to suggest their intended replacement with a new coinage, much less the Continental dollar.⁴⁵ However, Newman claims that “the intention to issue a coined dollar was obviously the reason,” then backs this up with a March 7, 1776-dated published letter that expresses “the contemporary desire” for coined silver in Philadelphia.⁴⁶ While there is little doubt that there was a contemporary desire for hard currency, this fact alone does nothing to link the coins with a particular person, place, or time. Further conjecture is raised by Newman when he quotes the description from the 1873 catalogue of the Seavey Collection for a silver Continental dollar. In it, cataloger William H. Strobridge lists the pewter pieces under the “colonial coin” section and the silver coins under “pattern pieces,” and he claims that these pieces were “struck from the dies for distribution among the patriotic friends of the First Congress.”⁴⁷ While this practice may have some historical precedence (at least with later federal coinages), there is absolutely no evidence that this occurred in 1776, and was simply conjecture of an earlier numismatist that Newman regurgitated. By 1971, New-

44. The analysis of Newman’s theory that follows is rather basic and generalized. Over time, each point of evidence that he raised took on a life of its own in numismatic print, and each could be analyzed much further than what is presented herein. An entire article could be written, for instance, just on Newman’s theory about the supposed replacement of paper notes with brass, pewter, and silver coins. So much has been written on this alone, that not enough space is available to go through every single time that a numismatist mentioned this as supposed proof and provided a counterargument.

45. Later, John J. Ford recognized that New York also did not print one-dollar paper denominations in the August 13, 1776 issue and suggested that New York likely had something to do with the coinage, further bolstering claims that Gallaudet was responsible for the coins. Stack’s, *John J. Ford, Jr. Collection of Coins, Medals and Currency Part I* (2003): 18. Erik Goldstein later shows that more than one million coins would have had to be struck in order for this to have actually occurred. Goldstein, “The Myth of the Continental Dollar, Part II,” 36–46.

46. Newman, “The Continental Dollar of 1776 Meets Its Maker,” 915.

47. Newman, “The Continental Dollar of 1776 Meets Its Maker,” 916. William H. Strobridge, *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Seavey Collection of American Coins, the Property of Lorin G. Parmelee, of Boston* (Cambridge: Welch, Bigelow, & Co., 1873), 6, 48. Over the years, this theory also evolved and became “fact.” In 1979, for instance, David P. McBride stated, “the silver specimens were actual patterns, that the brass specimens were die-trials, and that the pewter specimens were possibly distributed to members of the Congress to gain their support for a new coinage.” David P. McBride, “Linked Rings: Early American Unity Illustrated,” *The Numismatist* 92, no. 11 (November 1979): 2376.

man had expanded his line of thinking on this and boldly stated, “it was felt that an American issue of Continental Dollars in silver would have a stabilizing effect on the paper currency and dies for such an issue were prepared in 1776 by Elisha Gallaudet, a New York engraver.”⁴⁸

The next piece of conjecture comes in Newman’s attempt to link the engraver of the Continental dollar with that of paper notes. Since the coin imitates the designs of the fractional currency for February 17, 1776—ranging from one-sixth to two-thirds of a dollar—Newman states that “it is possible that the cuts for the paper money were made by the same person who cut the dies for the coinage.”^{49,50} Initially, Newman does not include Gallaudet’s name as the engraver of those paper notes and admits that “there is no clue from the fractional paper money as to the identity of the maker of the coinage.”⁵¹ He does not spe-

48. Eric P. Newman to Theodore V. Buttrey, letter dated November 11, 1971, in “International Numismatic Congress Correspondence, 1970–1975,” *Newman Numismatic Portal*, accessed February 17, 2023. At the time, Buttrey was collecting articles for the International Numismatic Congress (INC) proceedings for the conference that took place the year before.

49. However, to help make his point, Newman provides three examples of signed work by the engraver. In all three cases, however, Gallaudet uses some form of “sculptor” in his signature, rather than “engraver” or “fecit.” Furthermore, all known works by Gallaudet are for engraving printing blocks/plates, rather than punching dies for striking coins. These include a bookplate for the New York Society Library in 1752, signed E. GALLAUDET. SCT.; a bookplate for John Chambers, Esq., Chief Justice of New York in 1754, signed E. GALLAUDET SCULP.; and the frontispiece for the second edition of *The Memoirs of the Life of the Reverend George Whitefield* in 1774, signed ELISHA GALLAUDET SCULP. N. YORK. 1774. Newman, “The Continental Dollar of 1776 Meets Its Maker,” 917. On December 5, 1957, Swann Galleries auctioned a copy of *The Memoirs of the Life of the Reverend George Whitefield* that Newman purchased for \$10, using Dr. Julian Blanchard as a proxy bidder. Eric P. Newman to Julian Blanchard, letter dated December 2, 1957, in “Julian Blanchard Correspondence File, 1948–1967,” *Newman Numismatic Portal*. Accessed February 2023. Julian Blanchard to Eric P. Newman, letter dated December 5, 1957, in “Julian Blanchard Correspondence File, 1948–1967,” *Newman Numismatic Portal*. Accessed February 2023. The above is not to say that Gallaudet was not considered an “engraver,” as references to him as such certainly do exist. Rather, the above is a brief examination of how he signed his work.

50. In 1982, Newman received a letter from H. Michael Madaus, Assistant Curator of History at the Milwaukee Public Museum concerning “numismatic questions that have plagued me for some time,” including the supposed link between the paper and coined counterparts. “But, what came first?” Madaus asked. “Could not the coins (patterns) have been based on the currency just as easily. . .” H. Michael Madaus to Eric P. Newman, letter dated January 26, 1982, in “Assorted Correspondence and Ephemera File: MI,” *Newman Numismatic Portal*, accessed February 16, 2023. Unfortunately, Newman’s response may never be known, as, according to a hand-written note at the top of Madaus’s letter, Newman “answered by telephone” a few days later.

51. Newman, “The Continental Dollar of 1776 Meets Its Maker,” 917.

cifically link Gallaudet to the fractional notes until his 1967 publication, *Early Paper Money of America*, albeit without evidence.⁵² More than likely, this was also a bit of conjecture that has since been taken as fact.⁵³ He was convinced that “the dies for the 1776 Continental dollars are distinctly those made by an engraver rather than a die sinker” and had come to this conclusion because “the design is primarily a group of geometric lines [and] since Elisha Gallaudet was an engraver accustomed to using parallel lines, the manner in which the dies were cut is indicative of the handiwork of such a man as he and eliminates all American or foreign craftsmen trained in die sinking.”⁵⁴ As for the complete lack of mention or information in the *Journals of the Continental Congress*, Newman surmised that “perhaps the work was done as a patriotic service.”⁵⁵

The final claim raised by Newman was not based on conjecture, but hearsay. On September 6, 1957, Newman wrote to D. Wayne (Dick) Johnson, “I now have

52. Here, he states that Gallaudet had “engraved the well known sundial MIND YOUR BUSINESS cut and the 13 links cut for the fractional denominations of the Continental Currency issue of February 17, 1776.” Eric P. Newman, *The Early Paper Money of America: Inventory of Collection* (Racine, WI: Whitman Publishing Company, 1967), 17, 33. In 1991, John Kleeberg saw (what I feel is) evidence that would suggest that two different individuals made the coins, but instead felt it a “curious variation when we consider that the dies for the pewter patterns and the plates for the currency were made by the same man—Elisha Gallaudet.” John M. Kleeberg, “The New Yorke in America Token,” *Money in Pre-Federal America*, edited by John Kleeberg (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1992), 19.

53. Newman does not provide a source for this information, except for his own writings. Eric P. Newman, “Benjamin Franklin and the Chain Design: New Evidence Provides the Missing Link,” *The Numismatist* 96, no. 11 (November 1983): 2274–2275, 2281. It took some time for this theory to become so well-engrained in numismatic literature. For instance, in 1970, after Newman’s *Early Paper Money* was published, the New Netherlands Coin Company still noted that “the error CURRENCEY was a result of the engraver, believed to be Elisha Gallaudet, having used the one-sixth of a dollar denomination of Continental Currency paper (dated Feb. 17, 1776) as a model,” rather than claiming Gallaudet made both. New Netherlands Coin Company, Sale 62 (November 6, 1970): lot 429. Philip L. Mossman, *Money of the American Colonies and Confederation: A Numismatic, Economic & Historical Correlation* (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1993), 151. Oliver D. Hoover, “Continental Currency ‘Dollars’ in the Collection of the American Numismatic Society,” *The Colonial Newsletter* 55, no. 1 (April 2015): 4266.

54. Newman, “The Continental Dollar of 1776 Meets Its Maker,” 923–924. In 1975, Cornelius Vermeule, curator of classical art at the MFA Boston and numismatic author, helped further this notion in discussing the coin, that “the readiness with which the designs were used on contemporary paper currency shows that they were the creation of an engraver on a metal plate (apparently Elisha Gallaudet in Philadelphia) rather than a sculptor modelling in miniature or carving in intaglio.” Cornelius C. Vermeule, “Numismatic Art in America to 1796,” *Museum Notes* 20 (1975): 252. In my opinion, this is a moot point, as the engraver of the dies was trying to mimic what was already engraved on the paper Continental currency.

55. Newman, “The Continental Dollar of 1776 Meets Its Maker,” 917.

confirmation, from a member of the Gallaudet family, that this has been imparted to him by other members of the family,” and also made reference to an elusive book shown to him by this person, supposedly published ca. 1876, that stated Gallaudet to have made the coins.⁵⁶ Johnson was an expert in the medallist arts and, in particular, engravers and sculptors of the United States and into the colonial period. Johnson wrote back, “I have found no reference to Elisha Gallaudet in about a dozen books that I have around the period of the Centennial. It is a hasty conclusion, but the possibility seems that the book you are seeking is not numismatic.”⁵⁷ In his article, Newman wrote, “Robert Monro-Erwin, of Forest Hills, Long Island, the great-great-grandson of Dr. Thomas Hopkins Gallaudet, stated that he (Monro-Erwin) visited Edward Miner Gallaudet, in Hartford in 1911, and was specifically told that E G FECIT on the first United States coinage stood for ‘Made by Elisha Gallaudet.’”⁵⁸

Newman surely muddled the waters by suggesting three different makers for the Continental dollar in the 1950s—Getz, Gerry, and Gallaudet—and doing so without conclusive facts for any of the three. There were other individuals that Newman had found during his search, but never considered them in print and used the “Meets Its Maker” article to discount them before anyone else made the suggestion. Eliakim Garretson, for example, a Philadelphia silversmith, could just as easily have been suggested by Newman as Gallaudet was. Born in 1760, however, Garretson would have been just sixteen years old in 1776 and, according to Newman, “he would not have been selected to make the Continental dollar.”⁵⁹ Even once Gallaudet became widely accepted, that “they might represent the signature of Elbridge Gerry or Ephraim Getz” was still included in discussions as late as 1985.⁶⁰

With the “Meets Its Maker” article, the numismatic mindset of who made the Continental dollar was on track to being solidified. On August 31, 1959, Newman informed Edward R. Barnsley that “the Elisha Gallaudet situation is

56. Eric P. Newman to D. Wayne Johnson, letter dated September 6, 1957, in “D. Wayne Johnson Correspondence, File 1, 1955–1959,” *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online), 5. Accessed February 2023.

57. D. Wayne Johnson to Eric P. Newman, letter dated October 14, 1957, in “D. Wayne Johnson Correspondence, File 1, 1955–1959,” *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online), 6. Accessed February 2023.

58. Newman, “The Continental Dollar of 1776 Meets Its Maker,” 923.

59. Newman, “The Continental Dollar of 1776 Meets Its Maker,” 925.

60. When Bowers stated that “others have suggested Ephraim Getz or Elbridge Gerry.” Q. David Bowers, “Day Tripping Through the ‘Guide Book,’” *Rare Coin Review*, no. 58 (Winter 1985/86): 72.

now in print and I hope I have been reasonably convincing.”⁶¹ Quickly, numismatists began to cite the article as truth. Perhaps the earliest published reference to Newman’s article came in October 1960 by L. Miles Raisig, who wrote that the Continental dollar had been “variously described over the years as a token, a medal, and a circulating coin.”⁶² Particular to Newman’s theory, he surmised that “Gallaudet was an outsider—a New Yorker—and an amateur at the task credited to him. If the Continental dollar is considered to be a trial piece only, it is not too difficult to accept the idea of an out-of-state non-professional die-sinker.”⁶³

By 1961, collectors clearly began to see Newman as the authority on Continental dollars and taking his theory as fact. Charles French, a collector and dealer from Troy, New York, for instance, inquired whether Newman would be willing to authenticate a “Continental Dollar with Elisha Gallaudet’s initials.”⁶⁴ One of the biggest proponents of Gallaudet was the New Netherlands Coin Company. Almost immediately, they began to use this information to help guarantee the coin was an American product, such as in their advertisement in the May 1963 edition of *The Numismatist*, which states that the coin was “from dies by Elisha Gallaudet, struck in limited quantities either in New York or Philadelphia.”⁶⁵ Any sign of conjecture also vanished from Newman’s perception as well. In late 1974, for instance, Courtney L. Coffing—editor of *The Numismatic Scrapbook*—contacted Newman, “We have reviewed your comments in *The Numismatist* in August 1959. We would like to know if the intervening 15 years have produced information that would substantially add to your original conclusions.”⁶⁶ Newman’s response is interesting in that, not only does he purport his theory as fact, but he also ignores all of the previous individuals suggested. He wrote back, “no one has ever written me challenging any of the evidence or suggesting any other

61. Eric P. Newman to Edward R. Barnsley, letter dated August 31, 1959, in “Edward Barnsley Correspondence,” *Newman Numismatic Portal*, accessed February 17, 2023. Interestingly, Newman had just returned home from a summer vacation in Russia.

62. Raisig took issue with the attempt to link a New York origin with a coin as, at the time, it was believed to have been struck in Philadelphia. L. Miles Raisig, “The Continental Currency Makers,” *Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine* 26, no. 10 (October 1960): 2827.

63. L. Miles Raisig, “The Continental Currency Makers,” 2827–2828.

64. Eric P. Newman to Charles French, letter dated September 12, 1961, in “French’s Correspondence, 1957–1969,” *Newman Numismatic Portal*, accessed February 16, 2023.

65. New Netherlands Coin Company, “Numismatic Flea Market,” *The Numismatist* 76, no. 5 (May 1963): inside cover. By December, they were using this in their auction catalogue listings for the coin. New Netherlands Coin Company, Sale 57 (December 10, 1963): lot 1037.

66. Courtney L. Coffing to Eric P. Newman, letter dated December 20, 1974, in *Numismatic Scrapbook Correspondence, 1961–1976*, *Newman Numismatic Portal*, accessed February 17, 2023.

person,” and discussed the difficulties of working “on subjects on which no solution has been suggested for a century or more.”⁶⁷

In 1970, a rather intriguing roundtable was held concerning the maker of the Continental dollar.⁶⁸ While the meeting first appeared to be on the right foot, the results were less-than-stellar and it is certainly a good thing that the theories proposed there did not become accepted. However, some interesting (and fanciful) observations were made that should be analyzed herein. The roundtable participants tried to make connections between the limited set of known facts of the coin and anything else that they could think of. Some fanciful meanings were attached to “EG,” such as the possibility that it could actually be the initials of two individuals—namely, Eckfeldt and Getz, or Eckfeldt and (John) Gardner—but quickly dismissed this as FECIT is the singular form of the word, not the plural.⁶⁹ They then began to make up names, noting that EG could mean Egidia or Egidius in Latin, which translates to Gille or Giles in English, and could be relative of James Giles (of Machin’s Mills fame) or John Gill (printer of some Massachusetts notes).⁷⁰ Even the possibility that EG was a fictitious name was raised—that “possibly the die cutters initials were EB but to use them would confuse his work with Brasher,” and it was likely the work of Edward Bridgen,⁷¹

67. Eric P. Newman to Courtney L. Coffing, letter dated January 7, 1974 [sic], in “*Numismatic Scrapbook Correspondence, 1961–1976*,” *Newman Numismatic Portal*, accessed February 17, 2023. Based on accompanying correspondence, Newman’s response was written in 1975 but is dated 1974 because of proactive interference, accidentally writing last year’s date early in the following year.

68. Unfortunately, the secretary that recorded the meeting and author of the article, Byron Johnson, did not make note of exactly when, where, or by whom the meeting was held, just that it took place “at a local club meeting” and that the speakers consisted of individuals named Jerry, John, George, Henry, Tom, Bill, Frank, and Peter (with Helen bringing them steady rounds of drinks). The closest hint may be farcical in nature, that the roundtable was held at “the seventh meeting of the Pine Valley Booze, Pinochle and Numismatic Society.” Byron Johnson, “Roundtable Tackles Continental Dollar,” *Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine* (May 1970): 686.

69. The plural form is *fecerunt*.

70. Such a suggestion, however, is the same type of conjecture that was used to name Edward Getz in 1904 and Ephraim Getz in 1909, by taking the surname of a known engraver and affixing a relevant first name to it. Regarding Peter Getz, the roundtable added that “since there are so many mistakes in engraving the different varieties (i.e., CURENCY, CURRENCY, CURRENCEY, etc.) why not allow for one more and assume that Getz planned to put down Getz Fecit but gave it up after he started Getz the wrong way?” When called out for the ridiculousness of this suggestion, the person mentioned, “I’m just throwing out the ideas. You pick out the right ones,” which is what numismatists have been doing with the history of the Continental dollar all along. Johnson, “Roundtable Tackles Continental Dollar,” (May 1970): 687.

71. Reference was also made to a letter from Benjamin Franklin to Edward Bridgen dated

or even the work of Brasher himself after marrying Ann Gilbert; or that Abel Buell put them there to avoid detection of coining activities because of an earlier counterfeiting conviction.

Further observations from this roundtable is the fact that the initials on the coin have neither punctuation separating the letters nor a space denoting them as anything other than a single word. However, the novelty of this recommendation quickly wears off when reading their suggestions on what this may mean. Their theories included *exempla gratia* ("made as an example for approval," denoting its use as a pattern or experimental coin) and *ejusdem generis* (supposedly meaning "all edges gilt which is colloquial for 'of the best quality'").⁷² Interestingly, the roundtable also took issue with the date on the coin and, since the earliest reference of the dollars known to American numismatists at the time was in the February 9, 1786 edition of Richard Watson's *Chemical Essays*, published in London, they surmised that "the dollar without EG FECIT could have been struck anytime between 1776 and 1785 or 1786, while proposing that those with the initials could have been struck even later."⁷³ It is not until the end of the two-

October 2, 1779, which states that "the two Samples of Copper are since come to hand [in Paris]. The Metal seems to be very good, and the price reasonable; but I have not yet received the Orders necessary to justify my making the Purchase proposed. There has indeed been an intention to strike Copper Coin, that may not only be useful as small Change, but serve other purposes." According to the roundtable, "this letter might refer to the first brass specimen of the Continental dollar" and that the pewter specimens were struck by Bridgen and Walter Mould after 1779 (when the letter was written) but before 1785. The theory rests on Mould not leaving England until between those two years. While Mould is known to have fled England following a counterfeiting conviction in 1776, exactly when he left is still up for debate and could have been as late as 1781. There is, apparently, a letter from Bridgen to Franklin that included half- and one-ounce pieces of copper—the former would fit closely to the 224-grain average found amongst the brass dollar. Benjamin Franklin to Edward Bridgen, letter dated October 2, 1779, in Albert Henry Smyth, editor, *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Haskell House Publishers, Ltd., 1970), 381. Byron Johnson, "Roundtable Tackles Continental Dollar," *The Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine* (June 1970): 1052–1053. Gary A. Trudgen, "Walter Mould: Convicted Felon," *The Journal of Early American Numismatics* 1, no. 2 (December 2018): 5.

72. Byron Johnson, "Roundtable Tackles Continental Dollar," (May 1970): 686. This theory was also raised by Will Nipper, *In Yankee Doodle's Pocket: The Myth, Magic and Politics of Money in Early America* (Conway, AR: Bowmanstone Press, 2008), 247.

73. At the time, the earliest known reference to these was a report from 1866 London. The article notes that "most people believe all the varieties came out around the same time. There is nothing to substantiate this. If the trace elements in the tin are identical it would. If they are not the same trace elements then we should look for two striking periods." One speaker even suggested that there were "probably two striking periods, a first one around 1783 and a later one in Machin Mills in maybe 1786 or 1787 or 1788. The second period was when the EG initials were used." Byron Johnson, "Roundtable Tackles Continental Dollar," (May 1970):

part article that Newman was finally mentioned. Unable to come up with an answer themselves, one of the participants was willing to "go along with Newman's theory that Elisha Gallaudet made the dies for the Continental dollar."⁷⁴ Perhaps the biggest problem that the roundtable had with Gallaudet was one of skill, particularly with the uneven spacing of the legends. By 1776, Gallaudet was a successful engraver, and "you don't just start cutting away on steel without making a layout of what you intend to do. I find it hard to believe Gallaudet would make so many engraving errors after looking at his paper money and bookplates."⁷⁵ Despite any shortcomings, the roundtable concluded that "Gallaudet is our boy until proven otherwise."⁷⁶

Even then, with author after author proclaiming this as fact, there was always an air of doubt that surrounded the notion that Elisha Gallaudet produced the Continental dollar in 1776. In the 1960/61 edition of *Numismatic Literature*, for instance, a reviewer of Newman's argument felt that it was "a strong one," but does not hail it as fact.⁷⁷ The roundtable in 1970 began with heavy doubt of the theory, and only in the end, did they finally "go along" with Newman.⁷⁸ When, in 1974, Courtney Coffing contacted Newman, he did so with the hope that more concrete evidence had come along to prove the theory, but was likely left disappointed. In the Winter 1985/86 issue of the *Rare Coin Review*, Q. David Bowers admits, "the 1776 Continental 'dollar' has its secrets and keeps them well," before noting Newman's theory that "it may have been Elisha Gallaudet."⁷⁹ In 1990, the Society of Silver Dollar Collectors noted that "there is little corroborating evidence" that Gallaudet definitively produced the coin.⁸⁰ In 2003, the *John J. Ford, Jr. Collection* catalogue made some rather definitive claims about the Continental dollar, but ultimately noted, "Eric Newman made a case for Elisha Gallaudet but this is open to challenge."⁸¹ In 2009, Heritage Auctions began to admit, "we are

688, 690–691.

74. Byron Johnson, "Roundtable Tackles Continental Dollar," (June 1970): 1053.

75. Byron Johnson, "Roundtable Tackles Continental Dollar," (June 1970): 1054.

76. Byron Johnson, "Roundtable Tackles Continental Dollar," (June 1970): 1056.

77. GHN, "Review of Eric P. Newman, 'The Continental Dollar of 1776 Meets Its Maker,'" *The Numismatist* 72 (August 1959): 915–926, in *Numismatic Literature* 50 (January 1960): 46–47.

78. Byron Johnson, "Roundtable Tackles Continental Dollar," (June 1970): 1053.

79. Q. David Bowers, "Day Tripping Through the 'Guide Book,'" 72. Though the magazine eventually changed course, later stating that an example for sale "is signed by the artist, Elisha Gallaudet, with his signature appearing as E.G. FECIT." Q. David Bowers, "Colonial and Early American Coins," *Rare Coin Review*, no. 144 (November/December 2001): 2.

80. The Society of Silver Dollar Collectors, "So-Called 'Continental Dollar,'" *The N.A.S.C. Quarterly* (1990): 20.

81. Stack's, *John J. Ford, Jr. Collection, Part I*, 27.

unable to say with absolute certainty that Elisha Gallaudet prepared the dies for the Continental Currency coinage.”⁸²

The first serious challenge to Newman’s article came in 2014, when Catherine Eagleton, at the time a curator of paper money and modern coins at the British Museum published her article, “Collecting America: Sarah Sophia Banks and the Continental Dollar,” in *The Numismatic Chronicle*.⁸³ In the article, Eagleton uses evidence from the ledger of eighteenth-century collector, Sarah Sophia Banks, to make the argument that the Continental dollar was struck in Europe. In the ledger, Banks quotes Jonas Dryander—her brother’s librarian—who claimed that the Continental dollars were “never current, struck on speculation in Europe, for sale in America.”⁸⁴ In her article, Eagleton also presents a printed advertisement for the Continental dollar from the original purchase of the Banks specimen⁸⁵—the first of its kind ever located or even known and a remarkable piece of Continental dollar history that needs much more attention.⁸⁶ While Eagleton’s article did not attempt to tackle the EG FECIT question—merely giving a brief historiography of Gallaudet—it did pave the way for a new line of thinking regarding the 1776 Continental dollar. While people had their previous doubts, this was the first evidence-based article since 1959 that truly propounded a completely new theory about the coin’s origin.

Beginning in 2018, Eagleton’s evidence was presented to the larger American numismatic community and expanded upon by Erik Goldstein and David McCarthy. In four parts published in *The Numismatist* between then and 2022, their articles, “The Myth of the Continental Dollar,” presented evidence never before seen or considered. Part One focuses on personalities of the eighteenth century—not who may have made the coin, but who was talking about the coin. Regarding the possible maker, one intriguing observation was made in response to a mention of the coin in *Chemical Essays* by Richard Watson, published in 1786. There, Watson claimed that the coins were struck by “the Congress in

82. Heritage Auctions, *Los Angeles, California Auction #1128* (August 2, 2009), 16. Interestingly, by 2012, their catalogues mentioned Newman’s theory without any doubt. Heritage Auctions, *U.S. Coins Signature Auction, Auction #1173* (August 5, 2012), 13.

83. Catherine Eagleton, “Collecting America: Sarah Sophia Banks and the ‘Continental Dollar’ of 1776,” *The Numismatic Chronicle* 174 (2014): 293–301.

84. Eagleton, “Collecting America,” 298.

85. Eagleton, however, erroneously asserts that “the advertisement states that they were minted in Europe,” when they make no such claim.

86. Is it possible to source where the paper or ink was produced? While that, alone, would not prove where the Continental dollar was struck, it would be one more hint that could possibly lead a researcher in the right direction.

America,” but did not provide any documentation.⁸⁷ In response, a reviewer of Watson’s article in 1788 Connecticut called the claim a “strange error” and that “it is probable that some workman amused himself with copying one of the small bills emitted by Congress, into a die or mould, and then impressed or cast a piece of Pewter.”⁸⁸ Part Two included a section, “Who E.G. Is Not,” that gave a very brief historiography of EG FECIT, but provided nothing conclusive.⁸⁹

It is Part Four of “The Myth of the Continental Dollar,” that focuses on its design and potential location of manufacture.⁹⁰ This is the first time that the name Elie Gervais was used in print as a possible candidate that produced the Continental dollar.⁹¹ Accordingly, Ed Hohertz first made this suggestion in the *E-Sylum* online newsletter in the wake of the second “Myth of the Continental Dollar” article.⁹² Hohertz had connected the dots using a relatively obscure book by Friedrich Wilhelm Adolf Schlickeysen, *Erklärung der Abkürzungen auf Münzen der neueren Zeit des Mittelalters und des Altertums sowie auf Denkmün-*

87. Erik Goldstein and David McCarthy, “The Myth of the Continental Dollar,” *The Numismatist* (January 2018): 53.

88. Goldstein and McCarthy, “The Myth of the Continental Dollar,” 54. First published in *The New-Haven Gazette*, December 12, 1788.

89. Erik Goldstein, “The Myth of the Continental Dollar, Part II,” 40–41. After this article was published, the argument spilled over into the *Journal of Early American Numismatics* (JEAN): John M. Kleeberg, “The Continental Dollar: British Medals or American Coins?” *The Journal of Early American Numismatics* 1, no. 2 (December 2018): 159–211. Jeff Rock, “Point/Counterpoint: John Kleeberg’s Continental Dollar,” *The Journal of Early American Numismatics* 2, no. 1 (June 2019): 139–172. Julia H. Casey, “The Letter from the Officer of the 64th Regiment,” 29–35. Eric P. Newman, “Was 1776 Continental Currency Coinage Also Intended to Circulate as Coppers?” *The Journal of Early American Numismatics* 4, no. 2 (December 2021): 1–8. John Sallay and Patrick McMahon, “The Continental Dollar: Some Observations and Suggested Research,” *The Journal of Early American Numismatics* 5, no. 1 (June 2022): 99–114. Jesse Kraft, “Appendix to ‘The Continental Dollar’: Evidence from the ANS Collection,” *The Journal of Early American Numismatics* 5, no. 1 (June 2022): 115–120. None of the above, however, attempt to tackle the EG FECIT question. Furthermore, this is not to say that articles on the Continental dollar only appear in JEAN, but this is where the newest information is being shared. Other excellent articles have recently appeared in the *MCA Advisory* as well. Notably, Robert L. Rodriguez and Tony J. Lopez, “The Continental Dollar, Coin or Medal?” *The MCA Advisory* 24, no. 2 (2021): 52–59.

90. Erik Goldstein & David McCarthy, “The Myth of the Continental Dollar,” 48–57. Erik Goldstein, “The Myth of the Continental Dollar, Part II,” 37–46. David McCarthy, “The Myth of the Continental Dollar, Part III,” *The Numismatist* 135, no. 3 (March 2022): 37–43. David McCarthy, “The Myth of the Continental Dollar, Part IV,” *The Numismatist* 135, no. 8 (August 2022): 30–37.

91. There spelled as “Elias Gervais.”

92. It was this and subsequent *E-Sylum* articles that first brought Gervais to the attention of this author. Ed Hohertz, “What’s Next for the Continental Dollar?” *The E-Sylum* 21, no. 29 (July 22, 2018).

zen und münzartigen Zeichen, published in 1896.⁹³ While this source might be difficult for many numismatists to obtain (and language barriers would further hinder research), there was another, similar text much more readily available to American numismatists—the *Biographical Dictionary of Medallists*, by Leonard Forrer. This gargantuan undertaking was published in eight volumes between 1904 and 1930. The final two volumes, issued in 1923 and 1930, are supplements to the first six volumes, adding either new names or information to existing entries.⁹⁴ While Forrer's 1904 listing for Gervais does not provide any new information, the 1923 supplement delivered a bombshell: "The initials E.G. occur on a piece of American Continental Currency, dated 1776, which may be by this engraver (E. G. FECIT)."⁹⁵ As Newman admitted to searching through books on English engravers in 1952, the *Biographical Dictionary of Medallists* should have been one of his initial stops. His oversight, however, led to his erroneous conclusion that, "in 1776 the only engraver known in America or Europe having the initials E.G. was Elisha Gallaudet."⁹⁶ While it is known that Newman did not own a set of Forrer's books in his personal library, the American Numismatic Society library most certainly did have one.⁹⁷ One wonders, if Newman had seen the reference, would the historiography of this coin for the past 60 years have been what it was? Perhaps the probable European origins of the coin would be better understood by now.

THE LIFE OF ELIE GERVAIS

Elie Gervais (Fig. 3) was born in the Republic of Geneva on January 23, 1721 to Gedéon Gervais and Elisabeth Mallot. He was baptized as a Protestant on February 3 by Speet Senebier, who lived as a Moravian.⁹⁸ In the records, there are

93. Friedrich Wilhelm Adolf Schlickeysen, *Erklärung der Abkürzungen auf Münzen der neueren Zeit des Mittelalters und des Altertums sowie auf Denkmünzen und münzartigen Zeichen* (Berlin: 1896). First published in 1855, the earlier editions also mention Gervais.

94. Leonard Forrer, *Biographical Dictionary of Medallists* (London: Spink & Son Ltd., 1904, 1907, 1909, 1912, 1916, 1923, and 1930). Volume 1 (1904) covers, by surname, A–D; volume 2 (1904) covers E–H; volume 3 (1907) covers I–Ma; volume 4 (1909) covers Mb–Q; volume 5 (1912) covers R–S; volume 6 (1916) covers T–Z; volume 7 (1923) supplements information between A–L; and volume 8 (1930) does the same for M–Z.

95. Leonard Forrer, *Biographical Dictionary of Medallists*, vol. 7, 354.

96. Eric P. Newman, "The Continental Dollar of 1776 Meets Its Maker," 925.

97. Today, the earliest-known copy of Volume 7 entered the ANS library in 1940. Because this copy is in very poor condition, it has been, effectively, replaced by the copy that Catherine Bullowa-Moore donated decades later. That said, ANS librarian David Hill believes that the copy that entered the library in 1940 was not the first either. More than likely, the ANS acquired copies as they were issued and replaced as they wore down with excessive use.

98. "Birth Records," Les Archives d'Etat de Genève (AEG), Directory E.C. rep. 1.12, Regis-

four known variants to the spelling of his name: Elie Gervais, Elias Gervais, Elias Gervais, and Elie Gervais—with the latter variations generally limited to his early years in Geneva.⁹⁹ His father was an enamel painter, working in the Saint-Gervais district in the heart of the city when Geneva was known for its highly skilled and ornate miniature enameled creations—notably as embellishments on pocket watches. Because of his Genevan origins, Gervais's primary language was French—the language in which all of the early documents pertaining to his life were written. On May 15, 1734, at 13 years of age, Gervais was apprenticed to Jacques and Jean Louis Binet, master goldsmiths and gem setters in Geneva. The contract lasted for a five-year period, and the Binet brothers were "to instruct said apprentice in piety, good manners, [and] to show and teach him everything that depends on their said profession."¹⁰⁰ The contract stipulated that Gervais was obligated to pay 55 thalers for tools and supplies, and two louis d'ors specifically for needles and pins. This was to come in two installments: 27½ thalers and the two gold French coins in advance, and the second half of thalers to be paid halfway through the apprenticeship—all in the presence of a notary and a witness. Postscripts to the contract indicate that the second half was paid on time in January 1737. Another postscript, dated June 30, 1739, notes that Gervais "has completed his apprenticeship, has performed his duty with all the prudence and fidelity required, and has been very constant in his manners and zeal."¹⁰¹ Little else is known about his time as an apprentice or of the Binet brothers more broadly.¹⁰²

It was around this time that Gervais experienced a religious conversion to the Moravian church after a chance encounter with Philip Henry Molther (1714–

ter E.C. Madeleine B.M. 11. Special thanks to Alain Dubois, archivist at the Archives d'Etat de Genève. All documents pertaining to Gervais in this article were translated by present author.

99. While discussion of Gervais in numismatic literature up to this point has used the name "Elias Gervais," this paper uses "Elie Gervais" and suggests others begin to do so as well. While "Elias Gervais" sometimes turns up in contemporary documents (especially those in English), the spelling at birth was "Elie Gervais" and, for the vast majority of his life, he referred to himself as "Elie Gervais." Any primary source documentation on Gervais found in Europe in the time period under question will almost certainly use the latter name.

100. "Gervais Apprentice Contract," Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neuwied; Gervais, Elie; doc. nos.: 1.24–26. Special thanks to Rainer Raillard, Senior Archives Councilor at the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neuwied, and Bernd Willscheid, Director of the Roentgen-Museum Neuwied.

101. A final postscript dated July 3, 1739, is administrative and simply acknowledges receipt of the document transcript. "Gervais Apprentice Contract," Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neuwied; Gervais, Elie; doc. no.: 1.26.

102. Jacques Binet is not the individual of the same name from Lyon (1701–post-1739).

80).¹⁰³ Perhaps underappreciated today in regard to the extent of his impact upon eighteenth-century religion in Europe, Molther was a Moravian Brethren missionary whose relatively sudden appearance in the late 1730s caused quite a stir with implications that last to this day. Although a Moravian himself for only one year, in 1739, Molther decided to travel from Germany, through Europe with a pitstop in England, and move on to Pennsylvania to teach and evangelize. One reason for his quickly found popularity came from the fact that Molther had tutored and, therefore, was a favorite of the Zinzendorf family, whose patriarch, Count Nicholas Ludwig, was the head of the entire Moravian Church. His popularity was further bolstered due to the unfettered fervor that he emanated during his oft-delivered sermons.¹⁰⁴ Unfortunately, because of his relatively short relationship with the church, Molther did not fully understand church principles and, according to historian J.E. Hutton, “had picked up only the weak side of the Brethren’s teaching.”¹⁰⁵ Much to the dismay of John Wesley—the renowned evangelist who is credited with the Methodist Revival of the early eighteenth century, and who had just returned to London after a failed mission in the colony of Georgia—Molther was proselytizing that Moravians should abstain from most religious ceremonies until they had full assurance in their faith.¹⁰⁶ Molther

103. The Moravian Church was founded in the province of Moravia (now in the Czech Republic). Because of religious persecution throughout the 16th and 17th centuries, many church members fled Moravia and spread throughout Europe and the world. What is now called the Moravian Diaspora is considered the first large-scale Protestant missionary movement. (Here, *Diaspora* refers to small renewal groups that operate within the existing churches of Europe, of which there were several hundred throughout the continent in the eighteenth century). By the eighteenth century, the church had not only survived, but was thriving. The Moravian Church is considered the earliest Protestant denomination, dating to the Bohemian Reformation of the 15th century (60 years before that of Martin Luther). Some of the achievements by the Moravian church during this period were the missionary work that spread their gospel around the world in mere decades, the 30 settlements founded by Zinzendorf based on the original Herrnhut model, and a continuous prayer that ran uninterrupted, 24 hours a day, for 100 years beginning in 1727.

104. He was known to proselytize door-to-door during the day, followed by almost nightly sermons. Rev. L. Tyerman, *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A., Founder of the Methodists* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1876), 296–297.

105. J.E. Hutton, *History of the Moravian Church* (London: Moravian Publication Office, 1909), 296.

106. London Moravians, led by German-born Peter Boehler, founder of the Fetter Lane Society in May 1738, felt that full assurance in their faith was directly tied to eternal salvation. Instantaneous justification in their faith or in religious conversions was required, and there were no degrees of faith, but complete faith, clothed in confident assurance, unfettered by sin, fear, and doubt. The latter two, in particular, indicated a lack of faith and was an indication of further need for salvation. A radical conversion experienced by John Wesley at Aldersgate Street on May 24, 1738 led him to disagree with this, leading to a rift between



Figure 3. Silhouette of Elie Gervais, date unknown but must have been a part of a larger series of notable tradesmen at the Neuwied Brudergemeine, as it is labeled “No. 93.” Others included engraver and silversmith Ludwig Friedrich Schmutz (silhouette no. 73), as well as Christian van der Schilden, who likely took over as the Brudergemeine *petschierstecherstrube* after Gervais in 1783 (silhouette no. 138).

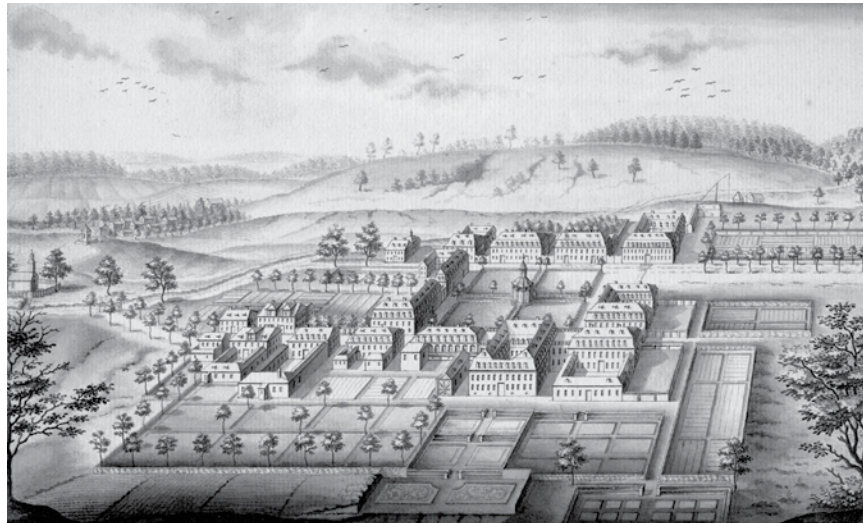


Figure 4. Drawing of Herrnhag, with the Brüdergemeine to the far left. Gervais drew this when the community was nearly abandoned, roughly 10 months before his departure. The blank side of the paper reads, “Elie Gervais Dessiné a Herrnhag le 27. Avril 1752.” Later engravings based off of this image have “Elie Gervais” on the front, to the lower left. Image courtesy Wolfgang Fuhrmannek, Hessisches Landesmuseum Darmstadt, CC BY-SA 4.0. Used with permission of the Hessisches Landesmuseum Darmstadt.

never made it to Pennsylvania, having unintentionally missed the boat in 1741. His wife, Johanna Sophia Molther, however, did embark and this band of Moravians founded the town of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania in that year.¹⁰⁷ The majority of

him and Molther. According to Wesley, “The first time I entered the meeting, I was alarmed and almost terror-stricken at hearing their sighing and groaning, their whining and howling, which strange proceeding they call the demonstration of the Spirit and of power,” and that Molther’s call to, essentially, boycott church, fasting, Communion, private prayers, reading the scriptures, etc. was known as “stillness.” According to Molther, a man should already believe in Christ before ever picking up a Bible, go to Communion, etc., while Wesley felt that a man needed to do these things in order to believe in Christ. The Fetter Lane Society did not make it past this controversy—“no longer was the Fetter Lane Society a calm abode of peace”—and was disbanded in 1740. Wesley founded the Foundery Society, and the rift continues to the present-day separation between Moravians and Methodists. J.E. Hutton, *History of the Moravian Church*, 296–297.

107. Despite never arriving in Pennsylvania, a cantata written by Molther, *Bringe uns, Herr, wieder zu dir*, was likely the first Moravian music played in America. Written and composed for the laying of the cornerstone of the Single Brethren’s house in Herrnhag, Germany on September 2, 1739, this piece was known as the “Herrnhag cantata” in English. This 17-num-

Molther’s later life was spent in Herrnhag. In 1775, Molther was consecrated as a bishop of the Moravian Brethren’s Unity, and died in Bedford, England in 1780.

While the Moravian Church and his religious dedication may seem irrelevant, it will play a prominent part in the life of Gervais and perhaps of the Continental dollar as well. This religious conversion experienced by Gervais led him to Montmirail, a small hamlet in the Swiss Canton of Neuchâtel.¹⁰⁸ Originally founded in the late seventeenth century by Moravian carpenter, John David, as a haven for French Huguenot and Waldensian refugees.¹⁰⁹ By about 1740, the Castle of Montmirail had become the center of Moravian Diaspora for French-speaking Swiss. The castle, itself, predates the Moravian influence and was completed in 1618 when the Canton of Neuchâtel was under French occupation. Evidence suggests that Gervais may have spent as little as one month in 1744 in Montmirail before returning to Geneva, perhaps there simply to experience the religious fervor. Montmirail later became renowned for the Moravian School for Girls, founded in 1766.

By late 1746, Gervais had begun to prepare to permanently relocate to the Herrnhag Brüdergemeine¹¹⁰—a communal spiritual center for Moravians located in the Wetterau, just north of Frankfurt am Main (in what is now Germany) (Fig. 4). A planned city that was founded in 1738 as the House of God in the Moravian ideal, complete with twelve gates of New Jerusalem as described in the Book of Revelation.¹¹¹ When Gervais arrived on May 17, 1747, conditions forced him to sleep on a slaw mattress in hallways for six weeks and, despite his training, the only available occupation was as a gardener. He was not officially received into the congregation as a brother until July 30. What happened in Her-

ber piece was performed in Bethlehem on July 7, 1742, just two weeks after the Bethlehem Congregation was organized. The Moravian Music Foundation collection in Bethlehem, contains eight cantatas from the 1740s, four of which were written by Molther. Richard D. Claypool and Robert F. Steelman, “The Music Collections in the Moravian Archives,” *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society* 23, no. 2 (1979): 13–49. Joseph Mortimer Levering, *A History of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 1741–1892: With Some Account of Its Founders and Their Early Activity in America* (Bethlehem: Times Publishing Company, 1903), 55–56.

108. Montmirail is about five miles from the center of Neuchâtel. This location is not to be confused with Montmirail, France, which is about 60 miles east of Paris.

109. David Bundy, “Should the Methodists Get All the Credit? The Methodist Crisis in Neuchâtel, 1820–1830,” *Methodist History* 54, no. 3 (April 2016): 183.

110. This is the reason why copies of his birth certificate were issued in November 1746. “Birth Certificate,” Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neuwied; Gervais, Elie; doc. no.: 1.10.

111. “Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb through the middle of the street of the city.” Revelation 22:1.

rnhaag is an exceptionally complex issue that began before Gervais's arrival. Ca. 1745, Christian Renatus von Zinzendorf—the 21-year-old (and only) son of the community's founder, Count Nicholas Ludwig Zinzendorf—had proclaimed that all souls were female and, as such, eligible brides of Christ.¹¹² There is evidence that the Moravian brothers practiced this in reality and married one another, heretically mixing the spiritual and sexual in the eyes of many. Within a year, word had spread beyond the community and the Count attempted to mitigate the situation by forcing everyone to pledge allegiance to him. Most resisted. By 1750, members of the community began to leave, and it was completely abandoned by 1753. As one of the last individuals to remain at Herrnhaag, Gervais did not depart until February of that year. By that time, the Count had already moved the headquarters for the Brethren to London. At the time, the Brethren commonly referred to the crisis as a “time of Sifting,” but is now often referred to as the Herrnhaag Scandal.¹¹³

From Herrnhaag, Gervais relocated to Zeist, a town in the Utrecht province of the Netherlands. Founded in 838, the Moravian Brethren first settled there in 1746, as word of the Herrnhaag Scandal spread. As a final holdout at Herrnhaag, Gervais was assigned this location as his next mission by the church. Despite the apparent splendor of the seventeenth-century Zeist Castle—purchased by the Moravians upon settlement—like his first weeks in Herrnhaag, his new quarters proved equally as squalid and Gervais was forced to live in very cramped conditions and received no work for several months. Little else is known about his time here, but further depressed conditions may have enticed him to leave, or he was again reassigned by the church after about three years of residence. To this day, the Zeist Castle is the center of Moravian activity in the Netherlands.

On September 18, 1756, Gervais arrived in Neuwied (Fig. 5). In the grand scheme of European history, Neuwied is a relatively young town, founded in

112. Renatus had made other claims, such as being the living “Side wound of Christ,” meaning that he was the embodiment of Christ's sacrificial love.

113. The Herrnhaag Scandal proves even more complex when one takes into consideration the level of slander and libel that existed at the time. A most-famous example is Voltaire's “Vie privée du roi de Prusse.” Over time, the Moravians may have exasperated the charges against them by systematically destroying archival records from this period between 1760 and 1810, “to erase the memory of this controversial and embarrassing period.” In the late twentieth century, Herrnhaag was resettled by the Moravian community and reconstructed. For more, see Paul Peucker, *A Time of Sifting: Mystical Marriage and the Crisis of Moravian Piety in the Eighteenth Century* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2015). Paul Peucker, “Selection and Destruction in Moravian Archives Between 1760 and 1810,” *Journal of Moravian History* 12, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 170–215.



Figure 5. Neuwied, ca. 1820. This is probably not too dissimilar to how Neuwied appeared 50 years prior, when Gervais was active as a die and seal engraver. Image courtesy the Indianapolis Museum of Art of Newfields, accession no. 46.64.

1653 by Count Frederick III of Wied.¹¹⁴ The site, in particular, was chosen because it allowed the only feasible access to the Rhine to the small Rhineland-Palatinate state, whose economy was left in ruins after the long Thirty Years' War (1618–48). The low elevation, however, was the cause for frequent flooding in Neuwied, making it difficult to attract new settlers. To help rectify this, early leaders opted for an unprecedented level of religious tolerance, leading to a rapid increase in population. While Neuwied is in the heart of the Upper Middle Rhine region of Germany, because of these progressive policies from a century earlier, over half of the city's population were Genevan or French when Gervais arrived. That same year of his arrival, Count Zinzendorf founded the Neuwied

114. The site, however, had earlier habitation in the village of Langendorf, which was destroyed in the Thirty Years' War. Before that, one of the largest Roman castra on the Rhine has been excavated nearby by archaeologists, and the very first bridges constructed across the Rhine (built under Caesar during the Gallic War, 55–53 BCE) were believed to have existed near present-day Neuwied.



Figure 6. A heraldry seal impression in wax, known to have been engraved by Elie Gervais on December 21, 1777 in his official role as *petschierstecherstrube* at the Neuwied Brüdergemeine. The family to which this seal belonged is currently unknown. Image courtesy the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neuwied.

Brüdergemeine, which still exists.¹¹⁵ It is here where Gervais was finally able to settle, work, and flourish. By 1760, he had become the official *petschierstecherstrube* (seal engraver) for the Brüdergemeine, a position he held until 1783. One German heraldry seal in wax is known to have been engraved by Gervais (Fig. 6). It shows a helmeted shield topped by four (4) six-pointed stars. The shield contains three (3) six-pointed stars, over a heart, over a crescent moon, with an open wreath below and flanked by rococo design elements. Gervais engraved it on December 21, 1777.

His engraving skills were recognized in the region even before then, however, as he began making dies for the local mints of Neuwied and Koblenz in the late 1750s. By 1764, he was the mint master of those two locations, a position he held until 1775, but working solely out of his workshop in Neuwied. By the end of his career, he had produced dies for coins and medals for mints in Neuwied,

¹¹⁵ The Neuwied Brüdergemeine and the Neuwied Brethren Church are the same institution, the former in German and the latter in English.

Koblenz, Bonn, Trier, Mainz, Ellwangen, and Cologne. He used three different signatures on his coins and medals of this period: G, EG, or EG•F, the last being an abbreviation for “Elie Gervais fecit.” While he did not place the full EG FECIT on any of his German coins or medals, the letter styles between those and the Continental dollar are strikingly similar, including such anomalies as a lack of key punctuation between his initials (Fig. 7). As a portraitist, his initials would often grace the obverse of a coin, and those of Koblenz engraver, Gotthard Martinengo (GM) would occupy the reverse. Sometimes, their initials were combined (MG, for Martinengo & Gervais), such as on the reverse of the 1769 20 kreuzer from Trier. Because portraits were generally reserved for larger coins in the late eighteenth century, the majority of coins with his initials are on pieces with larger diameters, such as the 1765 thaler of Prince Provost Anton Ignaz von Fugger-Flöt, struck in Koblenz, and the 1765 Convention guilder and half thaler, both of Ellwangen. The latest-known dated coins engraved by Gervais are from 1777: a series of coins from Cologne issued by Archbishop Maximilian Friedrich. A billon quarter-stüber coin from that date is also the smallest coin he is known to have engraved dies for, at just 17.2 mm.¹¹⁶

As an engraver, he also took on students. On July 27, 1761, Gervais accepted Marc Voullaire as an apprentice. Voullaire was born on March 26, 1749 in Geneva to Jacques Etienne Voullaire and was a cousin to Gervais. Eight-year-old Voullaire arrived alone in Neuwied in 1757, where he became one of many children in the Little Boys’ Asylum. Like that of Gervais, this apprenticeship was to last five years. Similar to clauses stipulated in the apprentice contract from his own youth, Gervais was to teach Voullaire “everything he knows and can know about engraving, without concealing or pretending anything, as far as the apprentice can understand.”¹¹⁷ Gervais provided all of the tools in return for ten louis d’ors. Voullaire was supposedly very good at the trade, but was unsuccessful due to political reasons. He did find some work in Herrnhut¹¹⁸ and later as a coat-of-arms engraver in Vienna,¹¹⁹ but settled as the professor of drawing at the Moravian School for Girls in Montmirail—where Gervais had resided ca.

¹¹⁶ See “Elias Gervais,” *Museum-Digital: Baden-Württemberg* (accessed October 2023). A complete *catalogue raisonné* of his work is wanting.

¹¹⁷ “Voullaire Apprenticeship Contract,” Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neuwied; Gervais, Elie; doc. nos.: 1.40–42.

¹¹⁸ Not to be confused with Herrnhag, despite its similar history. Herrnhut is a town in the Görlitz district of Saxony that was also founded by Count Nicolaus Ludwig as a Moravian brotherhood, in 1722. Located in present-day Germany, Herrnhut is near the borders with Poland and Czechia.

¹¹⁹ Lars-Gunter Schier, “Die Medaillen auf das Herrnhuter Mädchenpensionat in Montmirail,” *Schweizer Münzblätter* 248 (December 2012): 99.



Figure 7. The EG FECIT signature compared with several renditions of initials known to belong to Elie Gervais. Note the similarities, as well as the differences. Left, from top to bottom: 1776 Continental Dollar with EG FECIT, ANS 1911.85.7; 1759 ausbünstaler of Clemens Augustus of Bavaria, image courtesy Künker; 1777 silver thaler of Maximilian Friedrich of Cologne, ANS 1952.164.260; 1767 copper ¼ stüber of Maximilian Friedrich of Cologne, ANS 1940.88.1366. Right, from top to bottom: 1766 silver 1/12 thaler of Maximilian Friedrich of Cologne, ANS 0000.999.34605; 1766 silver 12 stüber of Maximilian Friedrich of Cologne, ANS 1959.211.13; 1765 silver 12 stüber of Maximilian Friedrich of Cologne, ANS 1959.211.12; 1766 silver thaler of Maximilian Friedrich of Cologne, ANS 1956.37.1; 1766 silver ¼ thaler of Maximilian Friedrich of Cologne, ANS 1956.34.2.



1744.¹²⁰ As a medallist, one of his more famous pieces is a relatively obscure medal, the Jubilee of the Foundation of the Moravian Girl's Institute at Montmirail medal in 1816. Others include portrait medallions of Niclaus von Wattenwyl and of Count Zinzendorf.¹²¹ He died on July 17, 1826, in Montmirail. Gervais was known to train other apprentices and journeymen as well, notably Jean Railard and Friedrich Ludwig Schmuz.

Aside from his numismatic contributions, Gervais was most successful as a supplier-workshop for furniture maker David Roentgen (1743–1807) and clockmaker Peter Kinzing (1745–1816).¹²² Founded in 1742 by his father, Abraham Roentgen, by the time that Gervais became affiliated with the company, Roentgen furniture was already considered some of the most extravagant pieces produced throughout the world.¹²³ Historian and curator for the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Wolfram Koeppe considers the Roentgens “the most successful eighteenth-century cabinetmakers in Continental Europe.”¹²⁴ Roentgen and Kinzing operated during a window when extremely high-end European luxury goods were manufactured and sold worldwide—to those who could afford them. The ornamental work that Gervais made for the furniture was one reason why it stood out from the competition. Roentgen and Kinzing were absolute masters of their crafts and considered the preeminent manufactories of wooden luxury objects. Their furniture and clocks were found in the drawing rooms of the wealthiest gentlemen, the parlors of the noble, and the courts of kings and queens—notably Catherine the Great of Russia and King Frederick William II of Prussia. These two companies were able to attract money from nearly every corner of the globe.

Account books exist between Gervais and Roentgen/Kinzing that trace their

120. This coveted position was later held by another famed medalist, painter, and sculptor, Fritz Landry (b. 1846), whose most notable work was the Swiss coinage of the late nineteenth, twentieth, and early twenty-first centuries.

121. L. Forrer, *Biographical Dictionary of Medallists* (1916), 314.

122. Roentgen and Kinzing were independent manufacturers who often collaborated together, notably on large timepieces. Their relationship was so compact that many historians presume that “Roentgen and Kinzing” was a single company, when this was not the case. German scholars know Gervais best because of his business relationship with Roentgen and Kinzing and not as a die engraver. Gervais was also the supplier for another individual named Deubner, but little is known about that relationship at this time.

123. Abraham Roentgen and family relocated to Neuwied in 1753 from Herrnhag (location of the Herrnhag Scandal), where David Roentgen was born in 1743. Though no evidence currently exists, it is possible that Gervais may have known (or, at least, known of) the Roentgens while living in Herrnhag.

124. Wolfram Koeppe, *Extravagant Inventions: The Princely Furniture of the Roentgens* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2012), viii.



Figure 8. A longcase clock produced by Roentgen and Kinzing. All of the metallic components were struck with dies engraved by Gervais and struck in his workshop. Additionally, the original drawing for the marquetry was drawn by Gervais, though created out of various types of wood in the Roentgen workshop. Image courtesy the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City.



Figure 9. An example of marquetry that was originally drawn by Gervais for use in Roentgen furniture and Kinzing clocks. Gervais produced many of these throughout the late 1760s and 1770s. Image courtesy the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neuwied.

business transactions from 1769 to 1775 and again from 1782 to 1783. While it is known that the Gervais workshop produced embossed dies for ornate rosettes and other metallic decoration, several components of Roentgen furniture and Kinzing clocks could have potentially been created in the Gervais workshop (Fig. 8). Gervais charged his customers based on the amount of time that he spent at their disposal, rather than the number or types of objects produced. As such, Gervais generally charged by the day.¹²⁵ Some instances of these include the three guildens that Gervais charged Roentgen for “the creation and delivery of three stamped that [he had] engraved for his rosettes” on February 27, 1771,

125. Gervais charged 36 kreuzers per day for drawing work, or about a quarter of a dollar. (60 kreuzer = 1 gulden [florin] = 5/12 thaler). Occasionally, the records make note of stübers. In 1771, Gervais charged a total of 34 guilders, 30 kreuzers; about 50 guilders in 1772; 124 guilders in 1774. He was generally paid within two weeks of charging. Not only was this considered an extremely quick for that time period, but also a generous sum. Today, 14 pages exist from the 1769–75 period, and just three from the 1782–83 period. All surviving account book entries for Gervais can be found at the following: “Gervais Account Book,” Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neuwied; folder: Gervais, Elie; doc. nos.: 1.54–55, 59, 62–63, and nos. 2.14–18, 21, 25, 29, 33, 37, 41, 44, 48, 51, 54, 57, 61, 64, 74, 76–77, 79, 81, 84–85, 87–88.

and payments from March 3 and April 8, 1774 that relate to a brass medallion.¹²⁶ Some of the entries in the account book are more detailed than others. An entry for February 29, 1772, for instance, notes, “David Roentgen owes Gervais and (apprentice) Raillard a day’s wages for making marquetry designs on a *table à la Caunitz*,” while an entry for July 23, 1773 merely states, “draw $\frac{3}{4}$ day.”¹²⁷ Gervais was also a graphic designer and supplied Roentgen and Kinzing with master drawings for marquetry, pictorial drawings, designs for clock dials, and so on (Fig. 9). According to historian Wolfram Koepp, Gervais was “a complete master of the difficult task of turning ornamental or figural creations into patterns for marquetry.”¹²⁸ Much of the marquetry he created was based on his own designs, while some were those of others. Prior to contacting Gervais, Kinzing is known to have only used cast metallic hardware, never die struck, and the new method allowed for greater amounts of detail that were unavailable on earlier pieces. Gervais was just one of several highly talented craftsmen employed by Roentgen and Kinzing. Others included painter Januarius Zick (1730–97), mechanic Johann Christian Krause (1747–92), and marquetry master Johann Michael Rummer (1747–1821).

On January 6, 1774, Gervais and the Neuwied Brethren agreed on a life annuity contract. This document was instrumental in not only the fiscal configuration of Gervais’s life and work from that point forward, but could also have directly affected circumstances surrounding the creation of the Continental dollar. The contract stipulated that Gervais would receive a free apartment for life, with wood and candles, as well as 150 Frankfurt florins (guilders) per year.¹²⁹ In return, the Neuwied Brethren would receive “the proceeds of his entire work [and] his tools also become the property of the Moravian Church.”¹³⁰ Therefore, if Gervais was responsible for creating the dies for the Continental dollar, he did so under the auspices of the Neuwied Brethren and, as such, all of the proceeds he earned would have gone to them.¹³¹ To drive the point home, the contract detailed that Gervais was to “keep accurate books and accounts of

126. These medallions are likely those that still can be seen on a longcase clock in the Metropolitan Museum in New York City. Wolfram Koepp, *Extravagant Inventions*, 243.

127. “Gervais Account Book,” Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neuwied.

128. Wolfram Koepp, *Extravagant Inventions*, 98.

129. The money and goods were received annually on December 30.

130. “Gervais Life Annuity Contract,” Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neuwied; Gervais, Elie; doc. nos.: 36–38.

131. This is not to necessarily suggest that either Gervais or the Moravian Church printed the advertisements found with the Banks coins and sold them one-by-one, but the Church would have had a claim to even a one-lump sum from an individual who commissioned Gervais to make the dies.

all his profits and expenses in his profession [and] will not make any trade or profit, nor frequent or substantial sale, barter, or purchase, concerning his trade, which is not entirely to the profit of the house, and without the foreknowledge of the economist.”¹³² If Gervais created the dies, the Moravian Church in Neu-wied is the one organization that should have known. Pertaining to the tools of his trade, it went on to state that he “surrenders to said fraternal house all his stamps, tools, instruments, machines, implements, materials or anything present or future useful for his profession.”¹³³ The documents closed by stating that Gervais was “to work in his profession as much and as long as his strength allows him,” though the timing for the contract was clear as Gervais was “aware of his old age, his infirmities, and his shortage of work.”¹³⁴

On that same day, Gervais filled out a last will and testament. Much of the information given in it parallels that of the previous document, but in Gervais’s words rather than those of the Brethren. Gervais did not have any children or heirs to his profession and, “considering that the house of the brothers, my residence, already famous as an engraver’s dwelling, [the Brethren] will take care to maintain this prestige, replacing me, after my passing, with people of my handicrafts, those with my tools know how to make use of it in proportion to the value I place on it.”¹³⁵ Mimicking the life annuity contract, the testament then states, “for these reasons I resign [i.e., give] the brothers’ house all my tools, my instruments, Machines, devices, materials or any thing that belongs to me now or in the future and that serves or can serve my profession.”¹³⁶ He stipulates, however,

132. “Gervais Life Annuity Contract,” Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neu-wied; Gervais, Elie; doc. nos.: 36–38.

133. An inventory of the goods that were transferred from Gervais to the Neu-wied Brethren was completed on December 30, 1773. If Gervais made the Continental dollars, they would not be included here as they are believed to have been made a decade later. “Gervais Life Annuity Contract,” Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neu-wied; Gervais, Elie; doc. nos.: 36–38.

134. “Gervais Life Annuity Contract,” Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neu-wied; Gervais, Elie; doc. nos.: 36–38.

135. “Gervais Last Will and Testament,” Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neu-wied; Gervais, Elie; doc. no.: 17.

136. His other possessions, such as his “Furniture, my clothes, including those that are worn out, crockery, jewelry, jewels, paintings, drawings, copperplate engravings, graphics or any other items that have no significant relationship to my profession; since these last mentioned things are things that I reserve the right to dispose of differently.” On December 31, 1790, his testament was amended to include, “Before any division of my engravings is undertaken after my death, brother Antoine Favre will take the “Battles of Rugendres,” 41 pieces [...] without prejudice to his share of the rest of the other engravings.” “Gervais Last Will and Testament,” Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neu-wied; Gervais, Elie; doc. no.: 17.

“on the condition [...] that I can use the said things for my job as long as I will still need them,”¹³⁷ which continued through at least 1785.

Elie Gervais died on March 20, 1791 in Neu-wied at the age of 70 years, 1 month, and 24 days. He went unmarried and, as noted above, did not leave any children. Although the exact cause of his death is unknown, the last six months of his life appear to have been spent in pain and he was forced to walk with crutches due to gout. He was buried in the Brüdergemeine Neu-wied Cemetery on March 23.¹³⁸

THE CASE FOR ELIE GERVAIS AS EG FECIT

To quote Newman in his “Meets Its Maker” article, “merely naming him without supporting data would satisfy no one.”¹³⁹ At this point, while nothing definitively links Elie Gervais to the 1776 Continental dollar, similar avenues of evidence used by Newman might likewise suggest that EG FECIT stands for “Elie Gervais made it”—notably, a match in initials, an established engraving career, and stylistic similarities between the coin and other known works. As such, the evidence may seem equally founded for both Gallaudet and Gervais. However, evidence for the latter may be slightly more circumstantially plausible. For each of the types of evidence raised by Newman for Gallaudet, an even greater case could be made for Gervais. For instance:

- While Gallaudet was an engraver by trade, he is not known to have ever produced any steel dies for minting coins or medals—all of his known work is the result of him engraving copper plate or printing blocks that a printer then used to produce the final product. The closest object to a coin or medal engraved by Gallaudet was the King’s College Literary Society medal (1768), but each specimen was hand-engraved rather than struck from engraved dies.¹⁴⁰ Gervais, on the other hand, was an engraver known to have produced steel dies for at least three different industries: coin production, seal engraving, and furniture making.
- While Gallaudet signed his known works only with variations of the word “sculptor,” Gervais signed many of his works with either G, E.G., or EG.F.

137. “Gervais Last Will and Testament,” Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neu-wied; Gervais, Elie; doc. no.: 17.

138. “Death Registry,” Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neu-wied; Gervais, Elie; doc. no.: 14.

139. Eric P. Newman, “The Continental Dollar of 1776 Meets Its Maker,” 917.

140. John Sallay, “The King’s College, New York, Literary Society Medals,” *The Journal of Early American Numismatics* 5, no. 1 (June 2022): 1–68.

using similar fonts to those used on the Continental dollar. While not EG FECIT, the known signatures of Gervais are much closer to the Continental dollar than those of Gallaudet. His initials can be found on coinage and medals of Neuwied, Koblenz, Cologne, Bonn, Trier, Mainz, and Ellwangen.

- While Newman claims that the engraver of the Continental dollar was “inexperienced” in die engraving to help explain the relatively poor execution of the design, Gervais does not fit this description. By the time the Continental dollar is thought to have been made in Central Europe, ca. 1783, he had already enjoyed a long and accomplished career as a die engraver. If a probable reason is to be ascribed to the poor execution of the design, the advanced age and deteriorating health of Gervais is the likely culprit. His life annuity contract, signed in 1774, for instance, made it clear that Gervais was “aware of his old age, his infirmities,” which had only advanced by ca. 1783. Furthermore, as noted above, by 1790, Gervais was only mobile with the help of crutches—further evidence that his health had affected his daily living. Simply put, if Gervais created the Continental dollar, he was past his prime.
- While Newman claimed that “there is no doubt that all of the varieties of the coinage were made by the same diemaker,”¹⁴¹ evidence may suggest otherwise. The advertisement discovered with the Banks specimen, for instance, states, “E.G. FECIT, its maker’s Name,”¹⁴² showing that the advertisements were printed for that variety alone and would not make sense if they were included in the sale of any other variety. However, the reverse of the EG FECIT variety is also paired with another obverse die that does not contain the signature, adding another layer of perplexity. Other incongruities also suggest multiple engravers, such as a variety of letter punches used, various misspellings, differences in the style of sundial, and different orders of states on the reverse. One of the unsigned obverse dies (Newman 2) does not use letter punches whatsoever and is completely hand-engraved. None of this necessarily proves that multiple engravers were used, just as the single variety being signed EG FECIT does not prove that one individual made them all. It should be remembered that only one side of one variety is signed and does not necessarily indicate that the same individual had anything to do with the production of any other die or the striking or distribution of the coin.
- Although not pertaining specifically to EG FECIT and, thus, outside the scope of this article, additional evidence further suggests a Central Euro-

141. Eric P. Newman, “The Continental Dollar of 1776 Meets Its Maker,” 917.

142. Erik Goldstein & David McCarthy, “The Myth of the Continental Dollar,” 52.

pean production. This includes the extreme similarities between the edge device used on the Continental dollars and those found in Central Europe at this time.¹⁴³ While the edge is in imitation of those used on Spanish-American dollars, they are rather distinct and are not an exact copy. That region of Europe was also experiencing an apex of pewter medals on an array of topics and designs being produced for sale.

- Furthermore, the earliest known published documentation of the piece is in a German publication (1783), while the earliest known suggestion that it was an American product (1786) saw near-immediate rebuttal from those in the United States (1788).

CONCLUSION

The historiography of the Continental dollar is fraught with speculation and conjecture. Over the decades, this has led numismatists to make many claims, from the most bogus to rather astute. While the understanding of the Continental dollar has made incredible strides in the past decade, conclusive proof has yet to be found. This would include an account book entry from the die engraver getting paid to make them, a contemporary letter from such an individual, or even a set of dies found in the personal belongings of an engraver.¹⁴⁴ Until then, we are left with further conjecture. That said, we live in a different age than when the legendary Eric P. Newman performed his research. No longer do we have to sift through the annals of the Continental Congress, no longer do we have to thumb through catalogue after catalogue hoping that new information can be found, no longer do we have to research isolated from one another—digitized and immediate global communication makes everything so much easier in those regards. As Eagleton, Goldstein, and McCarthy have started a new conversation about the 1776 Continental dollar, the truth seems nearly within reach. In less than a decade, a new understanding of the production location for this coin had narrowed from “in Europe,” as posited by Eagleton, down to Germany or Switzerland by Sallay and McMahon, and now—if we are to accept Elie Gervais as the engraver—it can be further reduced to Neuwied, Germany. If Gervais is the person, then the Moravian Brüdergemeine of Neuwied would have been involved, per their contract with Gervais. Other forms of detection should also be conducted for evidence, notably metallurgical content analysis on the various

143. Jesse Kraft, “Appendix to ‘The Continental Dollar,’” 115–120.

144. Even then, individuals lie and things get traded (especially within a given trade or craft).

compositions (and the pewter pieces in particular).¹⁴⁵ Until definitive proof exists, the role of Elie Gervais in the production of the 1776 Continental dollar is based on conjecture—just like the suggestions of Getz, Gerry, and Gallaudet before him.

REFERENCES

- Adams, Edgar H. "First Silver Dollar for the United States." *The Numismatist* 22, no. 6 (June 1909): 177–178.
- "Birth Certificate." Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neuwied. Folder: Gervais, Elie. Doc. no.: 1.10.
- "Birth Records." Les Archives d'Etat de Genève (AEG). Directory E.C. Rep. 1.12. Register E.C. Madeleine B.M. 11.
- Blanchard, Julian to Eric P. Newman. Letter dated December 5, 1957. In "Julian Blanchard Correspondence File, 1948–1967." *Newman Numismatic Portal*. Accessed February 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/520587?page=11>.
- Bowers, Q. David. "Colonial and Early American Coins." *Rare Coin Review*, no. 144 (November/December 2001): 2.
- . "Day Tripping Through the 'Guide Book.'" *Rare Coin Review*, no. 58 (Winter 1985/86): 70–76.
- . "Numismatic Nostalgia." *Rare Coin Review*, no. 109 (January/February 1996): 17–18.
- Breen, Walter to Eric P. Newman. Letter dated October 14, 1952. In "Walter H. Breen Correspondence, File 1, 1951–1956." *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online). Accessed February 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/536936?page=23>.
- . to Eric P. Newman. Letter dated February 15, 1956. In "Walter H. Breen Correspondence, File 1, 1951–1956." *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online), 81. Accessed February 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/536936?page=81>.
- Bundy, David. "Should the Methodists Get All the Credit? The Methodist Crisis in Neuchâtel, 1820–1830." *Methodist History* 54, no. 3 (April 2016): 180–191. <https://archives.gcah.org/bitstream/handle/10516/9836/Methodist-History-2016-04-Bundy.pdf>.
- Casey, Julia H. "The Letter from the Officer of the 64th Regiment was not About the 1776 Continental Dollar." *The Journal of Early American Numismatics* 4, no. 1 (June 2021): 29–35.
- "Circumstantial Evidence." *The Law Dictionary* (accessed October 2023). www.thelawdictionary.org/circumstantial-evidence/
- Chapman, Henry. *Catalogue of the Magnificent Collection of Ancient Greek and Roman, European, Oriental, Early American and United States Coins of George H. Earle, Jr., Esq., Philadelphia*. Philadelphia: 1912. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/auctionlots?AucCoId=20&AuctionId=511094&page=159>.
- . *Catalogue of the Collections of American Coins of George J. Bascom, Esq. and William F. Brown, Esq.* Philadelphia: 1915. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/auctionlots?AucCoId=20&AuctionId=511101&page=26>.
- . *Catalogue of the Collection of Coins of John M. White, Walter R. Heinrich, and a Philadelphia Collector*. Philadelphia: 1917. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/auctionlots?AucCoId=20&AuctionId=511110&page=30>.
- Chapman, S.H. & H. *Catalogue of the Magnificent Collection of Coins of the United States: Formed by John G. Mills, Esq.* Philadelphia: S.H. & H. Chapman, 1904. https://archive.org/details/catalogueofmagnioochap_4/page/14.
- . *Catalogue of the Magnificent Collection of Coins of the United States Formed by the Late Richard B. Winsor, Esq., Providence, R.I.* Philadelphia: S.H. & H. Chapman, 1895. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/auctionlots?AucCoId=21&AuctionId=510868&page=30>.
- Claypool, Richard D. and Robert F. Steelman. "The Music Collections in the Moravian Archives." *Transactions of the Moravian Historical Society* 23, no. 2 (1979): 13–49. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41179406>.
- Coffing, Courtney L. to Eric P. Newman. Letter dated December 20, 1974. In *Numismatic Scrapbook Correspondence, 1961–1976*. *Newman Numismatic Portal*, accessed February 17, 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/532558?page=36>.
- Crosby, Sylvester S. *The Early Coins of America; and the Laws Governing Their Issue*. Boston: Self-Published, 1875.
- "Death Registry." Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neuwied. Folder: Gervais, Elie. Doc. no.: 14.
- Douglas, Damon G. "British-American Colonial Coins." *The Numismatist* 61, no. 4 (April 1948): 249–250.
- Eagleton, Catherine. "Collecting America: Sarah Sophia Banks and the 'Continental Dollar' of 1776." *The Numismatic Chronicle* 174 (2014): 293–301.
- "E.G. on Continental Dollar." *The Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine* (June 1958): 1155.
- "Elias Gervais." *Museum-Digital: Baden-Württemberg* (accessed October 2023). bawue.museum-digital.de/people/33959.
- Ernst, C.V. *Die Nova Constellatio- und die Fugio- Münzen, die ersten Münzen der Vereinigten Staaten*. Wien: k.k. Hof- und Staatsdruckerei, 1910.

145. John Sallay and Patrick McMahon, "The Continental Dollar," 99–114.

- Forrer, Leonard. *Biographical Dictionary of Medalists: Coin-, Gem-, and Seal-Engravers, Mint-Masters, &c. Ancient and Modern, with References to Their Works, B.C. 500–A.D. 1900*. London: Spink & Son Ltd., 1904–30.
- Franklin, Benjamin to Edward Bridgen. Letter dated October 2, 1779. In Albert Henry Smyth, editor. *The Writings of Benjamin Franklin*. New York: Haskell House Publishers, Ltd., 1970.
- Frey, Albert R. “A Dictionary of Numismatic Names, Their Official and Popular Designations.” *American Journal of Numismatics* 50 (1916).
- “Gervais Account Book.” Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neuwied. Folder: Gervais, Elie. Doc. nos.: 1.54–55, 59, 62–63, and nos. 2.14–18, 21, 25, 29, 33, 37, 41, 44, 48, 51, 54, 57, 61, 64, 74, 76–77, 79, 81, 84–85, 87–88.
- “Gervais Apprentice Contract.” Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neuwied. Folder: Gervais, Elie. Doc. nos.: 1.24–26.
- “Gervais Last Will and Testament.” Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neuwied. Folder: Gervais, Elie. Doc. no.: 17.
- “Gervais Life Annuity Contract.” Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neuwied. Folder: Gervais, Elie. Doc. nos.: 36–38.
- GHN. “Review of Eric P. Newman, ‘The Continental Dollar of 1776 Meets Its Maker.’” *The Numismatist* 72 (August 1959): 915–926. In *Numismatic Literature* 50 (January 1960): 46–47.
- Gilkes, Paul. “Silver 1776 Continental Currency dollar brings \$1.41M.” *Coin World* (May 19, 2014), accessed February 2023. <https://www.coinworld.com/news/us-coins/silver-1776-continental-currency-dollar-breaks-million-dollar-ba.html>.
- Goldstein, Erik. “The Myth of the Continental Dollar, Part II.” *The Numismatist* 131, no. 7 (July 2018): 36–46.
- Goldstein, Erik & David McCarthy. “The Myth of the Continental Dollar.” *The Numismatist* (January 2018): 48–55.
- Heritage Auctions. *Los Angeles, California*, Auction #1128 (August 2, 2009). <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/auctionlots?AucCoId=8&AuctionId=74&page=366>.
- . *U.S. Coins Signature Auction*, Auction #1173 (August 5, 2012). <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/auctionlots?AucCoId=8&AuctionId=43&page=214>.
- Hohertz, Ed. “What’s Next for the Continental Dollar?” *The E-Sylum* 21, no. 29 (July 22, 2018).
- Hoover, Oliver D. “Continental Currency ‘Dollars’ in the Collection of the American Numismatic Society.” *The Colonial Newsletter* 55, no. 1 (April 2015): 4266–4268.
- Hutton, J.E. *History of the Moravian Church*. London: Moravian Publication Of-

- fice, 1909. https://www.google.com/books/edition/A_History_of_the_Moravian_Church/OQE3AQAAMAAJ.
- Johnson, Byron. “Roundtable Tackles Continental Dollar.” *Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine* (May 1970): 686–691.
- . “Roundtable Tackles Continental Dollar.” *The Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine* (June 1970): 1052–1056.
- Johnson, D. Wayne to Eric P. Newman. Letter dated October 14, 1957. In “D. Wayne Johnson Correspondence, File 1, 1955–1959.” *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online). Accessed February 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/523936?page=5>.
- Kelly, James. “Questions and Answers.” *Kelly’s Coins and Chatter* 1, no. 5 (October 1, 1948): 3. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/516028?page=2>.
- Kenney, Richard D. “Early American Medalists and Die-Sinkers (Prior to the Civil War).” *The Coin Collector’s Journal* 18, no. 1 (January–February 1951): 4–8.
- . “Early American Medalists and Die-Sinkers (Prior to the Civil War).” *The Coin Collector’s Journal* 18, no. 3 (May–June 1951): 57–60.
- Kleeberg, John M. “The Continental Dollar: British Medals or American Coins?” *The Journal of Early American Numismatics* 1, no. 2 (December 2018): 159–211.
- . “The New Yorke in America Token.” *Money in Pre-Federal America*, edited by John Kleeberg (New York: American Numismatic Society, 1992), 15–58.
- Koeppel, Wolfram. *Extravagant Inventions: The Princely Furniture of the Roentgens*. New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2012.
- Kraft, Jesse. “Appendix to ‘The Continental Dollar’: Evidence from the ANS Collection.” *The Journal of Early American Numismatics* 5, no. 1 (June 2022): 115–120.
- Levering, Joseph Mortimer. *A History of Bethlehem, Pennsylvania 1741–1892: With Some Account of Its Founders and Their Early Activity in America*. Bethlehem: Times Publishing company, 1903.
- Madaus, H. Michael to Eric P. Newman. Letter dated January 26, 1982. In “Assorted Correspondence and Ephemera File: MI.” *Newman Numismatic Portal*, accessed February 16, 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/531626?page=89>.
- McBride, David P. “Linked Rings: Early American Unity Illustrated.” *The Numismatist* 92, no. 11 (November 1979): 2373–2393.
- McCarthy, David. “The Myth of the Continental Dollar, Part III.” *The Numismatist* 135, no. 3 (March 2022): 37–43.

- . “The Myth of the Continental Dollar, Part IV.” *The Numismatist* 135, no. 8 (August 2022): 30–37.
- Mehl, B. Max. “The Question Box.” *Mehl’s Numismatic Monthly* 7, no. 1: 156–157.
- Mossman, Philip L. *Money of the American Colonies and Confederation: A Numismatic, Economic & Historical Correlation*. New York: American Numismatic Society, 1993.
- New Netherlands Coin Company. “Numismatic Flea Market.” *The Numismatist* 76, no. 5 (May 1963): inside cover.
- . Sale 57 (December 10, 1963): lot 1037. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/530543?page=65>.
- . Sale 62 (November 6, 1970): lot 429.
- Newman, Eric P. “Benjamin Franklin and the Chain Design: New Evidence Provides the Missing Link.” *The Numismatist* 96, no. 11 (November 1983): 2274–2275, 2281.
- . “Comments of Eric P. Newman on Revision of Colonial Section of Standard Catalogue.” In “John J. Ford, Jr. Correspondence, 1954.” *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online). Accessed February 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/519030?page=36>.
- . “Counterfeit Continental Currency Goes to War (Concluded from January, 1957).” *The Numismatist* 70, no. 2 (February 1957): 137–147.
- . “The 1776 Continental Currency Coinage.” *The Coin Collector’s Journal* 19, no. 4 (July–August 1952): 1–9.
- . “The Continental Dollar of 1776 Meets Its Maker.” *The Numismatist* 72, no. 8 (August 1959): 915–926.
- . *The Early Paper Money of America: Inventory of Collection*. Racine, WI: Whitman Publishing Company, 1967.
- . to Bernard “Bunny” Edison. Letter dated August 7, 1995. In “Bernard ‘Bunny’ Edison Correspondence, 1968–1995.” *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online). Accessed February 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/521890?page=17>.
- . to Charles French. Letter dated September 12, 1961. In “French’s Correspondence, 1957–1969.” *Newman Numismatic Portal*, accessed February 16, 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/521940?page=5>.
- . to Courtney L. Coffing. Letter dated January 7, 1974 [sic]. In “Numismatic Scrapbook Correspondence, 1961–1976.” *Newman Numismatic Portal*, accessed February 17, 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/532558?page=35>.
- . to D. Wayne Johnson. Letter dated September 6, 1957. In “D. Wayne Johnson Correspondence, File 1, 1955–1959.” *Newman Numismatic Por-*

- tal* (online). Accessed February 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/523936?page=4>.
- . to Edward R. Barnsley. Letter dated August 31, 1959. In “Edward Barnsley Correspondence.” *Newman Numismatic Portal*, accessed February 17, 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/561116?page=21>.
- . to F.C.C. Boyd. Letter dated August 18, 1958. In “F.C.C. Boyd Correspondence, File 5, 1958–2003.” *Newman Numismatic Portal*, accessed February 17, 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/527956?page=55>.
- . to Julian Blanchard. Letter dated December 2, 1957. In “Julian Blanchard Correspondence File, 1948–1967.” *Newman Numismatic Portal*. Accessed February 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/520587?page=10>.
- . to Kenneth Scott. Letter dated June 30, 1958. In “Kenneth Scott Correspondence, 1957–1958.” *Newman Numismatic Portal*, accessed February 17, 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/533985?page=7>.
- . to Richard Picker. Letter dated April 2, 1956. In “Richard Picker Correspondence, 1954–1956.” *Newman Numismatic Portal*, accessed February 17, 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/532576?page=40>.
- . to Sydney P. Noe. Letter dated February 12, 1952. In “Sydney P. Noe Correspondence, 1947–1956.” *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online). Accessed February 2023.
- . to Sydney P. Noe. Letter dated July 7, 1952. In “Sydney P. Noe Correspondence, 1947–1956.” *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online). Accessed April 2023.
- . to Theodore V. Buttrey. Letter dated November 11, 1971. In “International Numismatic Congress Correspondence, 1970–1975.” *Newman Numismatic Portal*, accessed February 17, 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/523927?page=13>.
- . to Walter Breen. Letter dated April 4, 1952. In “Walter H. Breen Correspondence, File 1, 1951–1956.” *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online). Accessed February 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/536936?page=19>.
- . to Walter Breen. Letter dated March 28, 1952. In “Walter H. Breen Correspondence, File 1, 1951–1956.” *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online). Accessed February 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/536936?page=18>.
- . to Walter Breen. Letter dated July 29, 1953. In “Walter H. Breen Correspondence, File 1, 1951–1956.” *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online). Accessed February 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/536936?page=42>.
- . to Walter Breen. Letter dated February 14, 1956. In “Walter H. Breen Correspondence, File 1, 1951–1956.” *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online). Accessed February 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/536936?page=79>.

- . to Walter Breen. Letter dated June 24, 1958. In “Walter H. Breen Correspondence, File 2, 1957–1978.” *Newman Numismatic Portal*, accessed February 17, 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/536937?page=23>.
- . “Was 1776 Continental Currency Coinage Also Intended to Circulate as Coppers?” *The Journal of Early American Numismatics* 4, no. 2 (December 2021): 1–8.
- Nipper, Will. *In Yankee Doodle’s Pocket: The Myth, Magic and Politics of Money in Early America*. Conway, AR: Bowmanstone Press, 2008.
- Noe, Sydney P. to Eric P. Newman. Letter dated February 14, 1952. In “Sydney P. Noe Correspondence, 1947–1956.” *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online), 21. Accessed February 2023.
- Noonan, Ray. “Money Tells U.S. History: Currency Reflects Struggles and Developments.” *St. Louis Globe-Democrat* (April 13, 1958).
- Peucker, Paul. *A Time of Sifting: Mystical Marriage and the Crisis of Moravian Piety in the Eighteenth Century*. University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 2015.
- . “Selection and Destruction in Moravian Archives Between 1760 and 1810.” *Journal of Moravian History* 12, no. 2 (Fall 2012): 170–215. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5325/jmorahist.12.2.0170>.
- Raisig, L. Miles. “The Continental Currency Makers.” *Numismatic Scrapbook Magazine* 26, no. 10 (October 1960): 2825–2828.
- Raymond, Wayte, editor. *The Standard Catalogue of United States Coins from 1652 to Present Day* 15. New York: Wayte Raymond, Inc., 1951.
- . *The Standard Catalogue of United States Coins from 1652 to Present Day* 16. New York: Wayte Raymond, Inc., 1953.
- Reed, Fred. “On This Date in Paper Money History.” *Paper Money* 44, no. 237 (May/June 2005): 220–222.
- Rock, Jeff. “Point/Counterpoint: John Kleeberg’s Continental Dollar.” *The Journal of Early American Numismatics* 2, no. 1 (June 2019): 139–172.
- Rodriguez, Robert L. and Tony J. Lopez. “The Continental Dollar, Coin or Medal?” *The MCA Advisory* 24, no. 2 (2021): 52–59.
- Sallay, John. “The King’s College, New York, Literary Society Medals.” *The Journal of Early American Numismatics* 5, no. 1 (2022): 1–68.
- Sallay, John and Patrick McMahon. “The Continental Dollar: Some Observations and Suggested Research.” *The Journal of Early American Numismatics* 5, no. 1 (June 2022): 99–114.
- Schier, Lars-Gunter. “Die Medaillen auf das Herrnhuter Mädchenpensionat in Montmirail.” *Schweizer Münzblätter* 248 (December 2012): 95–107. <https://doi.org/10.5169/seals-323432>.

- doi.org/10.5169/seals-323432.
- Schlickeysen, Friedrich Wilhelm Adolf. *Erklärung der Abkürzungen auf Münzen der neueren Zeit des Mittelalters und des Altertums sowie auf Denkmünzen und münzartigen Zeichen*. Berlin: 1896.
- Scott, Kenneth. *Counterfeiting in Colonial New York*. New York: American Numismatic Society, 1953.
- Society of Silver Dollar Collectors. “So-Called ‘Continental Dollar.’” *The N.A.S.C. Quarterly* (1990): 18–20.
- Stack’s. *John J. Ford, Jr. Collection of Coins, Medals and Currency Part I* (2003). <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/auctionlots?AucCoId=3&AuctionId=515253&page=32>.
- Strobridge, William H. *A Descriptive Catalogue of the Seavey Collection of American Coins, the Property of Lorin G. Parmelee, of Boston*. Cambridge: Welch, Bigelow, & Co., 1873.
- Trudgen, Gary A. “Walter Mould: Convicted Felon.” *The Journal of Early American Numismatics* 1, no. 2 (December 2018): 1–18.
- Tyerman, Rev. L. *The Life and Times of the Rev. John Wesley, M.A., Founder of the Methodists*. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1876.
- Vermeule, Cornelius C. “Numismatic Art in America to 1796.” *Museum Notes* 20 (1975): 251–256.
- “Voullaire Apprenticeship Contract.” Archives of the Evangelische Brüdergemeine Neuwied. Folder, Gervais, Elie. Doc. nos.: 1.40–42.
- Williamson, Raymond H. to Eric P. Newman. Letter dated October 3, 1954. In “Raymond H. Williamson Correspondence, File 1, 1954–1962.” *Newman Numismatic Portal* (online). Accessed February 2023. <https://nnp.wustl.edu/library/book/535379?page=8>.

